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THE DIMINISHING HERO IN RESTORATION TRAGEDY

by



SYEDA HAMEED

A THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

The bulk of Restoration tragedy has been largely ignored by critics. Most of the scholarship tends to focus on heroic tragedy, with special emphasis on the plays of Dryden and somewhat less on sentimental tragedy of which Otway's plays are considered the best example. Graphically presented, the plays of Dryden and Otway occupy the middle years of the period which were, beyond doubt, the best and most productive. However, the focus must be broadened to encompass the dramatic continuum upon which these two playwrights made their narrow, if prominent, impress. Flanked by many writers, usually of mediocre calibre, they drew from their milieu, modified, refined, innovated and provided a reciprocative, if unfortunately misunderstood, influence. Even as they were servilely imitated by their contemporaries, the imitations contributed to the rise of three sub-genres. In the chapters on She, Villain and Lovers' tragedy I have attempted to treat each of these sub-genres, which chronologically surround heroic and sentimental tragedy. She tragedy features a female protagonist who takes over from a weakening hero. The villain-hero of villain tragedy carries the entire burden of the play, while the lovers of lovers' tragedy share the role of the protagonist.

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If one examines Restoration tragedy in this fashion, with the men of greatest achievement and influence chronologically centered in an evolving genre, one begins to discern the phenomenon which is the prime concern of this thesis--the diminution of the hero. Set against the even greater diminution from the Elizabethan to eighteenth century tragedy, his diminution is truly fascinating, for he reaches his height in the epic heroism of Dryden and Orrery's protagonists and falls to the gentle, languishing sentimentality of Lillo's and Rowe's lovers. It is the sub-genres that provide continuity, and hence it is through a study of them that the process becomes clear. With the changing demands of the age, native and foreign influence, and the playwrights' inability to sustain their protagonists' heroism, the hero began to lose his former stature. The gap thus created was filled by the female protagonist, the villain, or the pair of lovers. In his weaker state, nevertheless, the hero remained on the scene, always a reminder of his former greatness.

Otway's hero is singled out from this unheroic mass as a "thinking-hero." To him I attribute a different type of heroism, which makes him comparable to, and a logical successor of, the heroic hero in the tragic image he projects. The mediocrity of the age in general, however, made it unable to absorb and utilize the Otwavian ideal which would have led naturally to high tragedy.



Shorn of all his former heroism the protagonist is recognizable as a Restoration gentleman, epitomizing politeness and decorum. Whether this gentlemanly quality was present in him even in his most exalted state may be a moot point in this study. Can his most exotic eastern, pagan or classical mask be penetrated? Does it always conceal the seventeenth century ideal of love and honour combined with social graces, essential attributes of gentlemen of quality? The main point, that which this thesis is intended to demonstrate, is that the gentlemanly protagonist who emerges as a final product is the vastly diminished direct descendant of the heroic hero.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The intentions of this thesis concentrate upon the career of the hero from 1660-1700. 1660 was the year of the Restoration of the monarchy which also marked the opening of the theaters and the resurgence of dramatic activity. The first type of tragedy that came into being was heroic tragedy featuring the heroic hero. Before I begin my central argument it is important to clarify the critical problems one encounters in defining the various "types" of tragedy, especially those problems pertaining to the use of terminology. Insufficient scholarship in the period particularly with regard to tragedy makes for a dearth of critical terms one can use to define the various genres and sub-genres of tragedy. The critics are most often divided in their use of critical vocabulary, or simply unconcerned about it. The only exception to this is "heroic" tragedy which is used by all Restoration critics and understood to refer to the earliest plays of the Restoration, the best of which were written by Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, and John Dryden. Heroic hero, likewise, refers to the protagonist of heroic tragedy whose peak period is from the mid sixties to the early seventies.



Lesser known classifications which are used often in this thesis are "she" and "villain" tragedy. These have been used from time to time by Restoration scholars like Allardyce Nicoll, Eric Rothstein and John Harold Wilson. Two classifications that I have coined in addition to these are "lovers'" and "thinking-hero" tragedies. So far as I know, no one has used these terms before, and therefore I explain their validity and viability in Chapters Five and Six. I have arranged the Restoration tragedies into these five categories in a table appended to the text.

The concept of the "diminishing" hero is central to my thesis. From the heroic status he enjoys in Orrery and Dryden's plays, he gradually diminishes to the sentimental weakling we encounter in eighteenth century tragedy. Therefore, the word "diminishing" as it occurs throughout the thesis may be viewed in this special sense.

Some of the major arguments of the thesis are outlined in this chapter. It begins with defining the concept of the hero and tracing the antecedents of the Restoration heroic hero. This leads to a discussion of the epic hero whose qualities are apparent in the Restoration heroic hero. Further, it takes up Eugene M. Waith's theory of the Herculean hero and examines the heroic hero in relation to it. It discovers the affinities between the Elizabethan "super" hero and the Restoration heroic hero. The antithetical delineation of the Jacobean heroes



is also considered briefly. Finally, the immediate influence of the heroes of Cavalier drama is examined via à vis the heroic hero. This completes the definition of the hero who is then discussed with regard to his diminishing trend which is noticeable in most tragedies written during the Restoration.

This study of the diminishing hero, as I stated earlier, is an attempt to trace the evolution of the protagonist from his beginnings as a heroic hero in 1660's to his gradual decline in 1700. As protagonist of the heroic play, the hero was all important. This meant the revival of the epic hero, modified to suit the age. To the epic hero's creed of bravery was added the creed of love. Together they constituted the heroic hero of the 1660's who was to remain the biggest anomaly of dramatic literature. The heroic hero's position is best summed up in 1664 in these lines spoken by Clorimun in Orrery's

The Generall:

Honour and Love my actions still shall guide.  
What's duty to obey, 'tis sin to hide.  
I'll make it to the world and you appear,  
To serve you is my glory, not my fear.<sup>1</sup>

From the obvious relationship that Dryden sees between the epic and heroic tragedy as also between the epic and heroic hero, it is apparent that a systematic study of the heroic hero should begin with the epic hero. He saw heroic tragedy as a direct offspring of the epic. In 1697, after all his major work was completed, he still talks



of "tragedy [as] a miniature of human life and epic poem [as] a draught at length."<sup>2</sup> As early as 1650 Thomas Hobbes saw a similar relationship: "for the Heroique Poem narrative is called an Epique Poem. The Heroique Poem Dramatique is Tragedy . . . The Figure therefore of an Epique Poem, and of a Tragedy, ought to be the same."<sup>3</sup> By the same token, Dryden's heroes Almanzor and Antony are modelled on Achilles and Rinaldo rather than Cyrus and Oroondates, which demonstrates his preference for the epic heroes. Certain common characteristics are recognizable in all epic heroes: that they must be brave warriors is one, that they must be begotten through supernatural intervention is another. The universal heroic feat is a fierce battle waged against the menacing dragon and the subsequent winning of the fair maiden. Without getting into a detailed analysis, one may point to the epic qualities of Dryden's Almanzor which will be treated in detail in Chapter Two on heroic tragedy.<sup>4</sup> Like his classical prototypes he arrogates to himself superiority to, and power over, the rest of creation.

The gigantic proportions of the epic hero classify him as Herculean or Apollonian: each of the two godly attributes may be combined in the same person to make him a perfect heroic emblem. Strength and Beauty are the sources of all his attributes, the chief of them being Love and Valour. These qualities preclude a tyrant or



Machiavellian hero, like Dryden's Maximin or Porter's Malignii, being of the truly heroic species. In fact a marked decline is noticeable as we pass on from the heroic to the tyrant or Machiavellian heroes in any given period.<sup>5</sup> A true hero does not need stratagems and machinations other than honest military tactics. He is honest by the strength of his arm and his divinely wrought weapons. He has a charmed life, so he need not resort to poisons and poniards. Forthrightness is his hallmark.

In Homer's The Iliad is contained the classic definition of the epic hero, in the words of Glaucus who summarizes the two essentials of heroism: "My father Hippolochus sent me to Troy with the instruction always to be brave and surpass all others and not to disgrace the ancestors."<sup>6</sup>

Strength of body and strength of mind become the cardinal virtues of the Homeric hero. These combined with supernatural gifts entitle him to his archetypal status of a demi-god. To be able to stand on his own, to shine in battle and keep alive ancestral glory places him on the pinnacle of the cosmic scheme. He participates in it of his own free will in order to demonstrate his *areté*.<sup>7</sup> He is a link in the ancestral chain which descends from the very heavens. He is, by virtue of being the chosen male, important to the maintenance of the integrity of his ancestral name. It is his belief in himself which carries



him through hazardous trials that he must face in order to make his mark on the world. Through an early death he earns his immortality among the humans as well as the Olympians.

The epic hero embodies some of the qualities Waith attributes to the Herculean hero. He states that the Herculeans "move in a territory shared by two genres, epic and tragedy . . ." Hercules, the prototype of the Herculean hero, was celebrated in epic form before he was made a subject for four classical tragedies.<sup>8</sup> But there is an important difference between the epic and the Herculean hero which establishes a closer kinship between the latter and the Restoration heroic hero:

Although Hercules has often been thought of as the hero, the embodiment of all that is quintessentially heroic, his career is not a paradigm of the career of all heroes. It reveals a strength and fierceness which relates him more closely to the Achilles who refuses to be reconciled with the Greeks, for example, or the Ajax who commits suicide to defend his heroic reputation than to the Odysseus who wins out through cunning or the Aeneas who sacrifices himself to the great purpose of founding Rome . . . Hercules, the Dorian hero, is a more primitive embodiment of *areté* than Achilles . . . In him the core of primitive strength, never completely transmuted by the refining power of more civilized ideals, is touched with the strangeness and mystery which belonged to a demigod.<sup>9</sup>

This definition of the Herculean hero fits quite neatly with the heroic pattern of Elizabethan and Restoration tragedy. Almanzor in Dryden's Conquest of Granada can easily fit the description of "a warrior of great stature who is guilty of striking departures from the morals of society."<sup>10</sup> Similarly it can be seen where



the epic hero must differ from both the Herculean and the Restoration heroic hero. He (the epic hero) cannot make the "striking departures" because he is the trend-setter and therefore essentially one with society.

Other Herculean characteristics may be found in a lesser form in the Restoration heroic pattern. The strength of a Hercules must exhaust itself in moving mountains, carrying monster bulls, killing, destroying--he is a giant who must be engaged in arduous tasks for the better preservation of mankind. Sometimes these tasks are directed by a benevolent monarch who subdues the hero's boundless energies.<sup>11</sup> All massive gigantic figures who stride through tales and romances--epic and folk--all over the world, pass from one impossible task to another to exhaust their godlike energies. Their best playground, like that of the Homeric heroes', is the battlefield where they reap the greatest glory, being constantly excited by their heavenly champions. The patronage of the gods, so important to the Herculean and Homeric heroes, is not a part of the Restoration heroic pattern. Dryden's heroes may invite supernatural comparisons but they are not bodily lifted into the heavens for reinforcement or re-armament. In the Iliad, for instance, no one suffers a serious defeat or injury because the gods are always there to aid and abet their favorites. Whenever the heroes are wounded, their bodies are taken to Olympus, and, within a few moments,



returned fully healed to the battlefield. Their arms, which are forged in the heavenly smithies, are assured of invulnerability.

Being born of a liaison between a human mother and a divine father, the Herculeans have much more access to moulding their own destinies than the ordinary mortals (however nobly born) of Elizabethan and Restoration tragedy. It is through the intercession of their mothers that they are saved from the fate of ordinary mortals. Achilles, for instance, is offered the choice of dying valorously or returning to a long and uneventful life in Greece. Hercules was the son of Alcamene and Zeus, Achilles of Thetis and Peleus, Aeneas of Venus. Whenever some insurmountable calamity threatens their sons the mothers swoop down from the heavens or rise from the sea to make for an easy solution to their problems.

In all heroic epics of the world one recognizes that the concept of the heroic is native to the tragic concept.<sup>12</sup> Waith regards this as true of the legends featuring the Herculean heroes, in their combining heroism with tragedy. He accepts Sewall's theory that "tragedy reveals simultaneously in one complete action, man's total possibilities and his most grievous limitations."<sup>13</sup> Taking this further, Waith considers the varying stress on "possibilities" and "limitations" responsible for the "more" or "less" heroic a tragedy is. This is one way of expressing the Aristotelian



idea of the fall of man from a high station in life, which makes for the dual response of pity and terror. Considered on the scale set up by Waith, the Restoration hero, true to his epic antecedents, displays wonderful possibilities more than grievous limitations. This cannot be maintained for all Restoration heroes, there being notable exceptions like Dryden's Antony in All for Love. Waith refers to the type represented by Antony, which is a heroic nexus between the two extremes, when he calls the Herculean hero "not only a legitimate kind of tragic hero, but as one who furnish[es] the most striking example of an attitude which some critics consider an important part of tragedy."<sup>14</sup> Therefore Antony has the heroic qualities which qualify him as a Herculean hero.

Dryden's indebtedness to the epic hero not only shows in most of his tragedies but also is explicitly stated in his prefaces and dedications. If tragedy is an imitation of an epic, it stands to reason that the hero must also absorb the same influence:

The shining quality of an epic hero, his magnanimity, his constancy, his patience, his piety or whatever characteristical virtue his poet gives him, raises first our admiration, we are naturally prone to imitate what we admire and frequent acts produce a habit.<sup>15</sup>

Just as an epic poem acts upon men's souls so also should tragedy. This ancient idea is best expressed in Aristotle's theory of "purging the passions." In Arté Poetica Minturno employs the typical analogy of a skilful physician which,



later, Dryden was to use to the same effect. Minturno says:

And seeing others endure such changes of fortune, we learn to guard against unexpected evil and if misfortune does come, we may learn to endure it more patiently . . . . The physician who with a powerful drug extinguishes the poisonous spark of the malady that afflicts the body, is no more powerful than the tragic poet who purges the mind of its troubles through the emotions aroused by his charming verses.<sup>16</sup>

His emphasis on instruction through example brings Dryden close to Aristotle, Horace, Minturno and other literary figures of the Italian and French rennaissance. Just as men imitate virtue, they shun vice. Therefore, it is important that a character be presented in accordance with the rules of Nature, the good in him apparent as well as the evil. Dryden uses Achilles as an example of a character who "appears a perfect hero, though an imperfect character of virtue."<sup>17</sup> What Dryden suggests here is that irregularities of character do not reduce, if anything they increase, the appeal of the hero. He considers Homer's Achilles and Tasso's Rinaldo as characters of imperfect virtue who are attractive due to their very imperfections.

They [Homer and Tasso] made their heroes men of honour; but so as not to divest them quite of human passions and frailties: they contented themselves to show you what men of great spirits would certainly do when they were provoked, not what they were obliged to do by strict rules of moral virtue. For my own part, I declare myself for Homer and Tasso, and am more in love with Achilles and Rinaldo.<sup>18</sup>

Waith refers to the same quality when he declares that "'admiration' rather than strict moral accounting, is the



expected response to the heroic hero."<sup>19</sup> Earlier, Minturno had spoken for the quality of "marvelous" in the tragic hero, irrespective of his moral standing. "Whoever suffers a marvelous thing, if it is horrifying or causes compassion will not be outside the scope of tragedy."<sup>20</sup>

From this heroic conglomeration of the past, Dryden and some of his contemporaries were able to extract their own formula for the hero. Formula it was, since it was an age of imitators and camp-followers, who, no sooner than a trend caught on, produced scores of hack writings. Dryden's ruling that the hero need not be virtuous provided his manners be of a piece,<sup>21</sup> which refers to the consistency maintained in character delineation, was lost in an effort to produce mediocre replicas of his various heroes. His is the lone voice of Reason which he champions as a faculty of discrimination and judgement, laying down the rule and practising it to the delight and admiration of his audience. Perhaps he is still untouched by time's corrosive effects because of his genius for handling universal issues, with an ear tuned to the needs of his age.

Another factor in the evolution of the Restoration hero is the Elizabethan super-hero who is likewise borrowed from classic mythology and the epics. Sometimes a direct influence is discernible, for instance, Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Dryden's Maximin, or Antony in Elizabethan and Restoration versions. Usually the influence is



discovered in individual characteristics, in a phrase, or a gesture. The Marlovian heroic figure is the Over-reacher who recognizes no reality outside his own mind and no law outside his own will. His wilful thrusts for power and disdain for social restraint separate him from the typical epic hero who, as I have said earlier, is an embodiment of virtue and piety. Dryden describes Aeneas as one whose manners were "piety to the gods, and a dutiful affection to his father, love to his relations, care of his people, courage and conduct in the wars, gratitude to those who had obliged him, and justice in general to mankind."<sup>22</sup> Dryden's admiration for Virgil's delineation of Aeneas is paralleled by his praise for Homer's Achilles. This testifies to the broadness of his vision which could perceive literary excellence in two diametrically opposed characters. It is Homer rather than Virgil who must have served as an inspiration for Marlowe's overblown hero, Tamburlaine, who falls into the Herculean category of unrivalled strength and valour. He must, likewise, have influenced Dryden and Lee's concept of the tyrant heroes. Tamburlaine's unfailing and arrogant faith in himself is demonstrated in his rise from a lowly Scythian shepherd to the Emperor of Barbary. He is, at once, valued and feared by one and all. This is society's tribute to a Herculean hero in allowing him to exercise almost limitless sovereignty. By calling himself the scourge of God, he justifies his scheme of extensive



warfare. In this self-justification he has some of the same fiendish qualities as most of Marlowe's heroes. Being a Moslem he is shown to have no sympathy with the Christian, except perhaps his faithful general Axalla.

Marlowe's hero though he may sound all huff and rant to unaccustomed ears is, in essence, a portrait of vitality, of striving reach, of elevation. Never again do we have such a graphic picture of the Herculean as in the following description of Tamburlaine:

Of Stature tall and straightly fashioned,  
 Like his desire, lift upwards and Divine,  
 So large of limbs his joints so strongly knit,  
 Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear  
 Old Atlas' burden. 'Twixt his manly pitch,  
 A pearl more worth than all the world is placed,  
 Wherein by curious sovereignty of art  
 Are fixed his piercing instruments of sight,  
 Whose fiery circles bear encompassed  
 A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,  
 That guides his steps and actions to the throne  
 Where honour sits invested royally.  
 Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,  
 Thirsting with sovereignty, with Love of arms,  
 His lofty brows in folds do figure death,  
 And in their smoothness amity and Life.  
 About them hangs a knot of amber hair,  
 Wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles was,  
 On which the breath of heaven delights to play,  
 Making it dance with wanton majesty.  
 His arms and fingers long and sinewy,  
 Betokening valour and excess of strength--  
 In every part proportioned like a man  
 Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine.<sup>23</sup>

All of the hero's being is summed up in a drive for sovereignty. "Nature at every level down to the atoms and up to the universe is war, a struggle, a process of the survival of the fittest."<sup>24</sup> Tamburlaine is a superman who sways the world by the exercising of his will. Marlowe's



hero comes closest to the Herculean ideal in directing his utmost efforts to establishing his superiority over men. Marlowe adopts this trait in Tamburlaine to a point of obsessive desire for self-glorification and public mortification for private good. His hero differs from the epic hero in that his reign is not the "reign of god" but rather it is a military dictatorship over a Hobbesian state of war and lawlessness. This quality of arrogating to himself power over all terrestrial creatures is an outcome of the Herculean hero's cultural myopia. Like Tamburlaine, his vision does not extend to the external world. It turns inwards which to him presents a more exciting reality than the one outside. Tamburlaine's eyes are fiery circles that "bear encompassed / A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres." This quality is implicit in Dryden's *Antony* and to some extent in *Almanzor*.

Waith refers to Marlowe's appeal to his reader's sense of wonder at witnessing the heroic spectacle presented in Tamburlaine the Great. This was the effect aimed at in play after play of the Restoration. Often the playwrights went beyond the boundaries of decorum and verisimilitude to achieve this effect. Therefore they failed to create the magnanimity of spirit which inflames the viewer's mind for great things.<sup>25</sup> Marlowe's hero embodies this quality in the epic grandeur of his speech, bearing and actions. Another name for this sense of wonder,



says Waith, is admiration.<sup>26</sup>

Indirect influence of other Elizabethan heroes may be found in the Restoration heroic heroes. There is a notable difference, however, in the Elizabethan tradition of multi-heroes. Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy has five heroes of various descriptions. Don Andrea's ghost may be a spectral hero, nevertheless the entire action lingers around him. Don Horatio is much more the traditional romantic hero who has the heroine's love and approbation, and is valiant and loyal; but he meets an abrupt end before the play is even half over. Other aspirants may be Don Lorenzo and Prince Balthazaar, but for the villainy which they perpetuate from beginning to end. Hieronimo has the heroic task of avenging the wrong done to the family but does not fulfill the traditional heroic pattern because of his age and his madness. That leaves only Bel-Imperia whose position is not prominent enough that she may be designated as the female protagonist. Dryden's contention that in an epic or a tragedy one hero must outshine others is important to the integrity of the hero. Where several heroes are introduced there is less likelihood of the emergence of a heroic figure:

The hero of the piece must be advanced foremost to the view of the readers, or spectator: he must outshine the rest of all the characters; he must appear the prince of them, like the sun in the Copernican system, encompassed with the less noble planets: because the hero is the centre of the main action; all the lines from the circumference tend to him alone he is the chief object of pity in the drama, and of



admiration in the epic poem.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore in the singling out of the heroic hero from the tradition of multi-heroes, a tragedy such as Kyd's must have offered a valuable contrast.

Brooding and sinister as Jacobean tragedy tends to be (especially plays set in Spain, France, and Italy), it naturally precludes the heroic hero who cannot survive in a rank and sinful atmosphere. With the heroic or Herculean type we cannot associate the word evil. Dryden uses the words "irregularity" or "imperfection" which do not have the negative connotations of evil (which inevitably implies evil for its own sake). Count Brachiano, for instance, is evil in a sense that Tamburlaine and Maximin are not. The difference, as suggested already, lies in the quality of "marvelous" in the latter. Waith refers to the truly villainous hero as "a kind of distortion, a hero whose opposition to society is made gross and clearcut, and whose largeness of soul is almost a travesty of heroic grandeur."<sup>28</sup> Bosola in The Duchess of Malfi, Flamineo in The White Devil, Giovanni in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore' and DeFlores in The Changeling had their successors among the protagonists of villain-tragedy, but they are clearly separate from the heroic species. There is nothing heroic about DeFlores' plain, unemotional acceptance of his love for Beatrice-Joanna. The entire action of these plays is furtive, cloaked in masques and playlets. Like the masque



of Soliman and Perseda in The Spanish Tragedy, Jacobean plays abound in presenting plays-within-plays to suggest the theatricality of life. The revenge masque that concludes 'Tis Pity She's a Whore' and the playlet of the "Bony Lady" in The Revenger's Tragedy are excellent examples of the use of theater as metaphor. Similarly the dance of madmen in The Duchess of Malfi tells the Duchess of all the hopelessness, idiocy, disorder and terror of the world. This and the appearance and disappearance of ghosts, spectres, cadavers and skulls suggest the helplessness of man, enmeshed in nature's design. Sometimes one is left with a sense of futile human endeavour and the meteor-like purposeless activity of man in the face of what is pre-ordained for him by the gods. The true hero defies the omnipotence of God and sometimes gets away with it. A heroic hero is not a pawn but a peer of the gods. He is, like Dryden's Almanzor, "a contemner of kings" and challenger of the gods. Furthermore, masques and plays are used in heroic drama as embellishments and poetic beauties rather than ominous portents. This is true of most marriage masques, pastoral masques and masques of the gods and goddesses at Mount Olympus. The notable exception here is the masque of the Spirits in The Indian Queen and masque of Orpheus in The Empress of Morocco which are ominous portents and have fatal consequences. Jacobean tragedy, therefore, has little bearing on the heroic tragedy. It is, however,



a powerful factor in suggesting alternatives for the hero in its use of villain-heroes, and female protagonists, an influence that will be treated thoroughly in Chapters Three and Four.

From Jacobean heroes we pass on to the sterile age of Cavalier heroes. Harbage in his Cavalier Drama finds all the seeds for heroism in the stilted protagonists of Lodowick Carlell and William Cartwright. Although he refers to them as "Caroline famine following Elizabethan feast"<sup>29</sup> he recognizes the esoteric quality and the pleasing naivetè of a group of playwrights who were "less case-hardened and more ingenious and . . . [who] hugged about themselves the tattered garments of an outworn chivalry."<sup>30</sup> There is not a theme, hardly an incident in the heroic plays that had not been already used by the Cavaliers in the three preceding decades. This holds good for the Cavalier hero who was essentially built on the same lines as his Restoration counterpart. His school of virtue, borrowed from the epic hero, included physical courage, prowess in arms, magnanimity and fidelity to a code of personal honour. Therefore, Harbage feels that Arviragus and Almanzor express the same class of heroism. He goes so far as to say that, tagged with rhyme, the love encounters of Carlell, Cartwright and Killigrew could easily be attributed to Dryden and Orrery.

This fact should not suggest that the Cavalier hero



was, in effect, a model for the Restoration hero. I still maintain that the age of the Cavaliers was sterile. It would be more accurate to suggest that the Restoration and Cavalier playwrights looked for the same material and found it in different places among prevailing literary trends. Besides the epic ideal there were Honore D'Urfe's love doctrines, romances of decadent Greece and Rome, to inspire the writers of two generations. But whereas the heroic heroes of the Restoration became proverbial for their epic grandeur, the Cavalier heroes remained at best "gentlemanly heroes." It is no coincidence that the heroic heroes too, by the end of the century, had dwindled into what is best described as "gentlemanly heroes." But the Cavalier heroes by annexing various prevalent codes, doctrines and cults reduced themselves to personified abstractions. Harbage considers them "silhouettes in black, white and gilt . . . animate but unalive . . . examples of etiquette, ethics and emotions."<sup>31</sup> The playwright is so conscious of the social status of his heroes (who are invariably aristocratic) that he can only give them the most elegant of speeches and worthiest of actions to prove their unparalleled worth. Lady Newcastle's nineteen plays abound in intellectual conversations between heroes and heroines, usually in the guise of shepherds and shepherdesses, on current "precieux" themes. Thomas Killigrew's feminine plays<sup>32</sup> show valorous heroes disguised with black



patches over their eyes, sustaining their heroism through what Harbage refers to as a "vast drainage of blood."

There are a few exceptionally good plays like Lodowick Carlell's Arviragus and Philicia (1636) and Denham's The Sophy (1641) which unfortunately do not make the rule on the Cavalier stage. Carlell's hero embodies the love and honour combination along with the précieuse of a gentlemanly hero. His platonic arguments conducted with chop-logic, among other characteristics, must have influenced some of the Orreryan heroes. The Sophy is considered by Harbage to be the jewel of the age; but its very qualities disqualified it for the age which was not looking for Denham's originality, restraint and realism. It was fashionable to produce inordinately long plays of shepherds and shepherdesses in the wake of Montague's The Shepherd's Paradise which has the unique distinction of having Queen Henrietta Maria play the leading role.<sup>33</sup> This hybrid, as I said earlier, produced the "gentlemanly hero." Waith attributes this to the intellectual milieu:

The intellectual climate favoured the development of a gentlemanly hero who did not rage unduly and whose desire for glory and greatness could be formulated in a way quite acceptable to society.<sup>34</sup>

After all that went into the making of a heroic hero, his glory was short lived: in ten or fifteen years, the vogue was over. Growing dissatisfaction with heroic drama resulted in condemnation of its hero as well as of its use of rhyme. This decline of heroic tragedy has been



thoroughly treated by Rothstein in his Restoration Tragedy and Singh in his Theory of Drama in the Restoration Period. In my discussion of heroic tragedy (Chapter Two) I treat it fully and also refer to it in all the subsequent chapters. Here it may suffice to point to the two major vehicles of change: the Duke of Buckingham's The Rehearsal, which I consider the finest parody ever written, as well as various lampoons, mock verses, prose-tracts floating around in the form of pamphlets, prologues, epilogues, diaries and letters. In 1668, two years before Dryden's Conquest of Granada, Thomas Shadwell contemptuously dismissed the heroic play as "wilde Romantick tales wherein they stress Love and Honour to that Ridiculous height, that it becomes Burlesque."<sup>35</sup> Mrs. Evelyn's remarks to her friend Mr. Bohun, on seeing Dryden's play, reflect the artistic hypocrisy and aesthetic appeal of the heroic genre:

Love is made so pure and valour so nice, that one would imagine it designed for Utopia rather than our stage. I do not quarrel with the poet, but admire one born in the decline of morality should be able to feign such exact virtue.<sup>36</sup>

Of The Rehearsal's effect as a powerful corrective of the dramatic form, there is an account in commendatory verses prefixed to Thomas Southerne's Works (1721).

She [the Tragic Muse] taught her Maximins to rant in Rhime  
Mistaking rattling Nonsense for Sublime;  
'Till witty Buckingham reform'd her Tast,  
And sneering sham'd her into Sense at last.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, Dryden's own repudiation of the heroic hero is the best indication of the turn of dramatic events. In his



dedication of The Spanish Friar (1681) he says:

I remember some verses of my own Maximin and Almanzor, which cry vengeance upon me for their extravagance . . . I repent of them amongst my sins and if any of their fellows intrude by chance into my present writings, I draw a stroke over all those Delilahs of the theatre.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, when an astute playwright like Mrs. Behn sums up the distaste for heroic drama there is no doubt as to the inclination of the public taste. In 1687 in her Prologue to The Emperor of the Moon she voices the sentiment of her age:

With Hero's and with Gods we first began,  
And thunder'd to you in Heroick Strain.  
Some dying Love-Sick Queen each Night you injoy'd,  
And with Magnificence, at last were cloy'd.

The rise and decline of the heroic hero within a span of ten to fifteen years brings one to the general conclusion that characters who survive on the epic canvas for centuries are short-lived on the dramatic canvas. Only an epic can contain a character like Achilles. Imagine the Spartan hero alongside Boabdelin in Conquest of Granada. This is what Dryden implied in his Dedication to the Aeneas when he compared the length of the epic with that of the tragedy, the latter being limited by its narrower canvas and various constraints of the dramatic unities. What was magnificent in the epics became ludicrous in tragedy, once the vogue was over. This can account for the readers' problem in comprehending a character like Almanzor.

The heroic hero's decline led to widespread



experimentation in other dramatic styles that had lain dormant for a while. One body of plays featuring the female in the title role became characterized as she-tragedy. John Banks became the most prominent playwright of this genre. The other type of plays which fall into a separate category were villain tragedies, presenting the villain as hero. Almost all playwrights experimented with this sub-genre and they produced some of the bloodiest tragedies of the period. Even while these two trends were becoming manifest, some playwrights were experimenting with Elizabethan romantic tragedy. The use of the word "romantic" here must distinguish romantic-tragedy from Elizabethan revenge-tragedy which was the popular source for villain-plays. These trends were readily acceptable as substitutes for the grandiloquence of the heroic hero. Nor did they entirely dispense with his grandeur. There are several plays with heroic settings and she, villain, or lovers' themes. Lavish settings, costumes, locales continued to delight the eye, while the mind craved for gentler themes to excite "pity" and "compassion" rather than "admiration" and "awe." These sub-genres of Restoration tragedy will be treated in detail in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

The final and most effective refutation of the heroic play was the rise of sentimental tragedy which gave birth to the gentle hero. I have referred to him as the



"thinking-hero," Otway's unique contribution to the sentimental genre. This hero is comparable to the Drydenesque hero, both being excellent examples of their respective ethos. In the range of Restoration tragedy, which is generally regarded as obscure by literary historians, only Dryden's super-hero and Otway's thinking-hero still excite genuine interest.

Once it has been established that the hero is "replaced" it remains to be seen what is the status of the new hero. Does he, in the end, become all-powerful or is his stature visibly reduced? The "women-heroes" of she-tragedy perform a dual function. The fact that they adopt the protagonist's role does not divest them of their feminine functions. Each one of Banks' heroines, for instance, is resolute, heroic and valiant on the one hand, and soft, melting and compassionate on the other. Even the ones endowed with Amazonian traits like the various Scythian, Eastern and Mediterranean queens, who are the sole commanders of their forces, show a marked weakness for a shipwrecked prince or enemy general. Here their state may be likened to that of the heroic hero who shows the same strength and weakness, though in grander proportions: "To Honour bound and yet a slave to Love."

The protagonist of villain-tragedy is much reduced in stature compared to the heroic hero. Unlike Almanzor, whose open nature and crystal-like mind enabled him to



proclaim his thoughts before the world, the villain-hero must confine his thoughts to the counsel of a few close associates. Even a nobly conceived villain like Abdelazer prefers to use the night for his cover. In his preface to Troilus and Cressida, Dryden's remarks on the undesirability of a villain-hero discover the cause for his diminished state:

To produce a villain, without other reason than a natural inclination to villainy is, in Poetry, to produce an effect without a cause; and to make him more a villain than he has just reason to be, is to make an effect which is stronger than the cause.<sup>39</sup>

With the exception of Abdelazer, the effect always outweighs the cause which makes for weakness of the villains as heroes. Unlike the female-protagonist the villain-hero is not called upon to fulfill the lover's function, which is left to the shadowy figure of a romantic "hero," who skulks through a few scenes in the play. The villain's love, which usually amounts to lust, is calculated to reinforce his villainy and never becomes a major issue. Here one must regard the tyrant heroes, like Dryden and Lee's Emperors, as notable exceptions for whom love may well become the major issue.

The lover-hero of lovers' tragedy shares his protagonist's role with the heroine. Along with his consort he performs exactly half of the heroic hero's functions: while he excels in love he has no stakes in war. It is not that he lacks the innate heroism but rather that he has



no opportunity to demonstrate it. The shift from honour to love is most apparent in lovers' tragedy. Dryden's inclination to move the passions of his audience by depicting the misfortunes of lovers was becoming apparent as early as 1677. "Then we are not touched with the sufferings of any sort of men so much as of lovers, and this was almost unknown to the ancients . . . neither knew they the best commonplace of pity, which is love."<sup>40</sup> With the passage of time pity has become the mainstay of Dryden's dramatic criticism. Now Aristotelian Catharsis was translated in "pity for the distress'd." In his preface to Troilus and Cressida he explains how the terrible misfortunes of persons of high estate abate our pride:

But when we see that most virtuous, as well as the greatest, are not exempt from such misfortunes, that consideration moves pity in us, and insensibly works us to be helpful to, and tender over, the distressed; which is the noblest and most god-like of moral virtues.<sup>41</sup>

The state of the protagonist in lovers' tragedy is such that it evokes precisely the tender feelings to which Dryden refers here. In appealing to the audience's sense of compassion the lover-hero, significantly, anticipates Otway's thinking-hero.

Otway's heroes, as I have stated earlier, are in a class by themselves. In stature they compare well with Dryden's heroes, for while the latter are physically endowed the former are well endowed mentally. However, no common scale can be used to measure them. The fact that



they both believe in principles of love and honour does not bring them any closer since their treatment of these principles differs widely. Otway's plays fall into what John Harold Wilson classifies as "high tragedy." His hero is an individual who struggles to establish order in an essentially disordered universe. His agony is for one purpose: to bring good out of evil. Therefore, it is upon his potential dignity rather than his inherent weakness that focus is centred. Aristotelian ethos demands that the protagonist endures his suffering with patience and dignity. Later the endurance of the tragic hero wore thin. Excessive emotionalism became the hallmark of the hero. Otway's hero was several steps removed from the sentimental hero. His outward demonstration of grief, for instance, did not lose him his heroic dignity. Dryden explains this in terms of Aeneas weeping:

If tears are arguments of cowardice, what shall I say of Homer's hero? Shall Achilles pass for timorous because he wept on less occasions than Aeneas? . . . the tears of Aeneas were always on a laudable occasion. He weeps out of the compassion and tenderness of nature . . .<sup>42</sup>

Dryden's Antony comes closest to Otway's thinking-hero and is every bit as finely drawn. Therefore, Dryden not only makes out a case for the sensitive hero but also he uses Longinus to prove the worth of pathetic tragedy:

To write pathetically, says Longinus, cannot proceed but from a lofty genius. A poet must be born



with this quality: yet unless he helps himself with an acquired knowledge of the passions, what they are in their own nature and by what springs they are to be moved, he will be subject either to raise them where they ought not to be raised, or not to raise them by the just degrees of nature.<sup>43</sup>

Later, pathos was to become bathos and tragedy a travesty upon sentiment. Dryden could not have foreseen the death of tragedy some twenty years after he had, so convincingly, made a case for the pathetic.

This account of the rise and decline of the heroic hero is treated in the following chapters of my study. There is considerable emphasis on the alternatives or replacements for the heroic hero. Even before going into the details of she, villain, lovers', and thinking-hero tragedies one must warn the reader of a problem of chronology. Since I have decided to work with sub-genres instead of chronologically, my chapters do not fall into neat historical patterns. Heroic tragedy roughly covers the first twelve years. I consider Dryden's Conquest of Granada as a landmark there. It does not follow, however, that she, villain and lovers' tragedies fall into the remaining three decades in that order. Villain tragedy seems to run throughout the period, the earliest example being Porter's The Villain in 1661 (which held the stage for over a decade), and the latest being Ravenscroft's The Italian Husband in 1698. The rise of she-tragedy is almost concurrent with the decline of the heroic, the earliest example being John Weston's The Amazon Queen in



1667. In the 1680's lovers' tragedy became manifest in Otway's earlier plays and random efforts of female playwrights.

In these four decades of rapidly changing dramatic styles one must determine the place of the hero. Here, again, we go by Dryden's progression from the heroic into the non-heroic sphere. Six years after the second part of Conquest of Granada was published Dryden made public his intent to move away from the heroic.

Passion's too fierce to be in Fetter bound,  
And Nature flies him [Dryden] like Enchanted Ground.  
What Verse can do, he has perform'd in this,  
Which he presumes the most correct of his:  
But spite of all his pride a secret shame,  
Invades his breast at Shakespeare's sacred name.<sup>44</sup>

One year later he created the first example of the thinking-hero, although still with epic proportions, in the person of Antony. I prefer to discuss Antony in the chapter on heroic tragedy because it was not until Otway wrote his two great tragedies The Orphan (1680) and Venice Preserv'd (1682), that the thinking-hero recognizably became the dramatic peer of the heroic hero.

In working with approximately two hundred Restoration tragedies for this study, I discovered a scarcity of secondary materials in most of the areas I planned to explore. Dryden was one of the few exceptions, because several studies of Restoration tragedy have dwelt again and again on the heroic drama. Most noteworthy are exclusive studies of Dryden's plays by Bruce King and



Arthur Kirsch. Rothstein's comprehensive work Restoration Tragedy encompasses genres other than heroic, but it is a generalized comment on the tragedy rather than adherence to a specific problem. Singh's work on The Theory of Drama in the Restoration Period draws from all genres and all plays to bring forth the evolution of theory. While these studies have proven invaluable in my research, I have been able to use them only as secondary material useful as background rather than premises for agreement or disagreement. This accounts for a lack of direct reference to Restoration critics in my analysis of she, villain, and lovers' tragedy, where I believe I am breaking fresh ground. This, however, does not apply to Dryden, as representative of heroic drama, as I have noted above. Similarly from the considerable interest in Otway and Lee evinced in the two exclusive studies by Aline Mackenzie Taylor and Roswell G. Ham, I have been able to use their critical opinions as additional support for my views on the "thinking-hero."

With the exception of Dryden, Otway, Orrery, Lee and the single tragedy of Mrs. Behn, none of the work of these playwrights exists in definitive editions. While their first editions are fairly intact in content, they occasionally have faulty pagination and no line numbers. Therefore references to the texts must of necessity be to the pages rather than lines. Dividing acts into scenes is another contribution the modern editors could have made for



convenience of line reference. In the original, this too does not exist.



## CHAPTER II

### HEROIC TRAGEDY

The decline of the hero began within the framework of Heroic Tragedy. This framework must not be viewed too simply because of the neoclassical influence of the French plays and the English resistance to it. With notable exceptions, like Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery's Mustapha and Sir Charles Sedley's Antony and Cleopatra, the bulk of the heroic plays were not pure neoclassical imports from the French. Most of Dryden's heroes, for instance, were only as "perfect" as a faithful copying from nature would allow. Even his Montezuma does not measure up to the classical standards suggested by Chapelain, Scudery, Mairet and Claveret in "La Querrelle du Cid."<sup>1</sup> The heroic hero's stages of development involved a beginning, progression and decline. The first, or "pure" stage (1650-1665) is a carryover from the Cavalier tradition which, combined with continental imports, gave rise to "court plays" written for very select tastes, and presented within a controlled environment. The second, or "bombast" stage (1665-1675) is characterized by a mingling of native and foreign elements to produce the obviously heroic drama, namely, Dryden's most popular plays. In the third or "control" stage



(1675-1700) a wide variety of heroism is experimented with by various practitioners, from a sedate Dryden to the frenzied Lee, all of whom show a marked tendency to define tragedy in Shakespearean terms.

The dates assigned to these categories must remain flexible: whereas all "pure" plays were written within the first few years of the Restoration and were not repeated later, experimentation with the two remaining kinds was to continue beyond their specified period. It can be safely said, however, that the bulk of the "bombast" and "control" plays were written in the periods stated above.

Heroic tragedy has been subject to several definitions. From Davenant's earliest use of the term in 1663 and Dryden's more systematic attempt to formalize it, there has been an increasing tendency among scholars to reprocess its definition. In his preface to The Siege of Rhodes (1656) Davenant used the term "heroic" play to suggest a dramatic piece intended to "advance the characters of virtue in the shapes of valour and conjugal love."<sup>2</sup> Dryden's essay "Of Heroic Plays" prefixed to The Conquest of Granada traces its progress from Davenant to its heyday in 1670. Heroic drama in Davenant, he says, was a substitute for tragedies and comedies: an example of "moral virtue, writ in verse, and performed in recitative music." His The Siege of Rhodes, the prime



example of this genre, Dryden says, is defective in design and variety of characters. Therefore he evolves his own formula for heroic tragedy, gaining insight from Ariosto: "an heroic play ought to be an imitation, in little, of an heroic poem; and consequently, . . . love and valour ought to be the subject of it."<sup>3</sup> From Davenant and Dryden it is clear that heroic plays were considered a separate group from the tragedies and comedies. Even when they ceased to be referred to as such by the playwrights, the distinction remained obvious. For instance, Porter's The Villain, produced in the same year as Dryden and Howard's Indian Queen, is referred to by diarists like Pepys and critics like Langbaine as a tragedy as distinct from the latter which is regarded as a heroic play.

Other attributes of heroic drama which distinguish it from contemporary tragedies include rhyme, which was a fashionable rather than necessary element. The heroic plays needed to be wholly serious, that is, not interspersed with scenes of comedy. It follows that only the fortunes of persons in a high station concerned the writer of heroic tragedy. Whether the outcome be "good" or "bad" for the protagonists was not a determinant of the genre. In Corneille's Le Cid and Cinna the lovers are united while upholding the principles of love and honour. This is the general practice on the English stage too, although there are notable exceptions like Orrery's Mustapha which ends in



the noble deaths of both princes in a similar quest for honour.

In creating the heroic prototype the English dramatists were influenced both by native and foreign sources. The native or pseudo-native influence was imbibed from the court circles where the cult of Platonic love, introduced from the Parisian salons at the instigation of Queen Henrietta Maria, was the fashionable trend.<sup>4</sup> Platonic affections colored conversation, and literary expression, and induced a highly artificial attitude of mind. A set formula for social intercourse was laid out in Honore D'Urfe's L'Astree which was the Carolinian book of etiquette. The précieuse and platonic conventions began to breed absurdly exaggerated notions of love and honour which in turn led to character "types" who could best exemplify these notions. James Howell's account summarizes the prevalence if not popularity of this cult:

The Court, affords little News at present, but there is a love call'd Platonic Love, which much sways there of late; it is a Love abstracted from all corporeal gross Impressions and sensual Appetite, but consists in Contemplations and Ideas of Mind, not in any casual fruition.<sup>5</sup>

From this highly modish tradition, which aimed to present norms of perfection in social interaction, came the works of courtly playwrights: William Habington's The Queen of Aragon (1640), Sir John Suckling's Aglaura (1638) and Bennorault (1639), William Cartwright's The Royal Slave (1636), Lodowick Carlell's Arviraqus and Philicia (1639)



and Sir John Denham's The Sophy (1641?) and the prolific writings of the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle. These plays provided all the basic situations as well as character types to be imitated by the purists of the heroic school. The most significant contribution of this esoteric coterie was the "gentleman-hero" as distinguished from the renaissance flesh-and-blood figures of Websterian drama. The hero was not only the soul of honour in his generous dealings with friends and rivals, but a brave general and ardent lover as well. He indulged in arduous debates on the subject of love and honour with the heroine who was equally well versed in every manner of sophisticated argumentation. The revival of these plays by the two companies from 1660-1670 made them easily available to the general public as is evident from Pepys' comment on The Queen of Aragon: "To the Duke of York's playhouse; and there saw, the first time acted, 'The Queen of Aragon' an old Blackfriars' play, but an admirable one, so good that I am astonished at it, and wonder where it hath lain asleep all this while."<sup>6</sup>

The other source of influence was directly from the acquired French tastes of Charles II and his boon companions. In their youthful exile on the continent they were regular patrons of the three existing theatres: Hotel de Bourgongne mostly for tragedies, Palais Royal for comedy, and Theatre du Marais for Machine plays. Under the



patronage of Cardinal Richelieu and Louis XIV, the French theatre was in a state of constant flux. The founding of the French Academy by Richelieu in 1635 established the "rules" of the neoclassical system as found in the works of sixteenth century Italians who had discussed and expounded the doctrines of the Ancients and Aristotle in particular. The classical school found its strongest support in the writings of Chapelain, La Mesanardiere, and the Abbe d'Aubignac. In the salons of Mme. de Maitenon and Mme. Rambouillet intellectual theories were discussed by the leading wits of the time. With the spectacular success of Corneille's Le Cid in 1636, the salons became the hotbed of the controversy which culminated in "La Querrelle du Cid," sponsored by Richelieu and carried on by purists like Chapelain and Scudery. Although their indictment was by no means vicious, they established permanently the importance of the rules, their divisions and subdivisions in French dramatic art. Corneille's success with Horace, Cinna and Polyeucte made him the unquestioned monarch of the French stage despite the objections of the academicians. The exiled English nobles witnessed a part of this controversy and the most productive period of Corneille's dramatic art. This included "tragedies heroiques," comedies and farces, and machine plays (which were fast becoming the rage due to Cardinal Mazarin's interest), and the odd farce or pastoral play.



Exposure to all this criticism on the continent led the nobility to involve themselves with the dramatic events in England. Just as the playwrights aimed to please Louis XIV, Richelieu and Mazarin, and the latter gave financial and intellectual patronage to the playwrights, similarly did the relationship evolve on the English side of the channel. The influence of the court, as stated earlier, is considerable on the dramatic literature produced during the first decade of the Restoration. This includes the structure of the play as well as the conception of the hero. Therefore it is quite natural that King Charles should draw Sir Samuel Tuke's attention to Calderon, and Orrery's to the neo-classic French dramatists. The point at issue was whether the iambic hexameter could be introduced into English plays, according to the French example. Orrery being active in the discussion was enjoined to "employ some leisure that way":

When I had the Honour, and Unhappyness the Last Time to kiss his majts, hande, he Commanded me, to write a Play for Him; . . . And therefore . . . I Presumed to lay at his majts Feet a Trage-Comedie, All in Ten Feet Verse and Ryme. I wrigg it in that manner . . . because I found his majty Relish'd rather, the French Fassion of Playes, than the English.<sup>7</sup>

The play which Orrery was to present before the King was The Generall which instantly met with royal approval. ". . . I have read your first play which I like very well and doe intend to bring it upon the stage . . ."<sup>8</sup> Thereafter, all his dramatic works were highly regarded by



the intelligentsia of the age. In his preface to the definitive edition of Orrery's plays, Clark regards him as the first man to write a "full fledged heroic play." The Generall was composed in 1661 although not until 1664 was it actually performed before Charles and his court at Whitehall. Davenant's The Siege of Rhodes saw the light of day a few months after Orrery penned his piece. Therefore, Clark feels Orrery's play should be given its rightful place as the pioneer effort in the genre. Davenant and Killigrew grew anxious for more courtly tragedy from the illustrious peer. Meanwhile Dryden and Crowne were showering him with compliments. Frequent attacks of gout confined him to his Irish estates, where, what was begun as a dilettante hobby soon became a consuming interest. In the next fifteen years he produced nine plays which included a couple of farces written towards the end of his career. Uniformity of theme, characters, and presentation is the hallmark of all his plays. His leading figures pay constant homage to virtue or honor while being consumed with love for one another. They are extraordinarily distinguished for their ethical and physical attainments. Their relationship with one another as with the lesser characters is marked by numerous disputes over the respective obligation of love and honour. This familiar refrain caused Pepys to make his most astute piece of criticism:



. . . the play (Tryphon) though admirable, yet no pleasure almost in it, because just the very same design, and words, and sense and plot, as every one of his plays have, any one of which alone would be held admirable, whereas so many of the same design do but dull one another; and this, I perceive is the sense of every body else, as well as myself, who therefore showed but little pleasure in it . . .<sup>9</sup>

In 1665 Orrery presented to Davenant what was to become his best dramatic piece, namely Mustapha. For the first time he created a less rigid structure, very occasionally permitting a glimpse of emotion, but the play as a whole was no whit closer to life. It was, nevertheless, a remarkable success, the King and his mistress Lady Castelmayne being present at the opening day. Pepys records his displeasure with the play which gave no vent to Betterton and "Ianthe's" histrionic talent. However this was not the popular verdict, if one accepts Downes' account of the "vast profit" it brought to Davenant and his company. The King showed his pleasure by having elaborate scenic devices prepared by John Webb for its performance at Whitehall. The outbreak of the plague postponed this project for a while. In 1666 the play season began afresh with Orrery's Mustapha designed by Webb and performed by the Duke's players on the Whitehall stage. John Evelyn comments:

This night was acted my Lord Broghill's tragedy called Mustapha before their Majesties at Court, at which I was present . . . I was invited by my Lord Chamberlaine to see this tragedy, exceedingly well written, tho' in my mind I did not approve of any such pastime in time of such judgements and calamities.<sup>10</sup>



Even Pepys changed his mind two years later when he saw it at the Duke's for the second time: "a most excellent play in all respects for words and design as ever I did see. I had seen it before but forgot it, so it was wholly new to me."<sup>11</sup>

From the evidence of Pepys, Evelyn, and Downes, its popularity if not excellence, is assured. The new dramatic genre introduced to the public by The Siege of Rhodes, The Generall and Indian Queen became thoroughly popularized by Orrery's Mustapha, and was unanimously declared the mode of the day.

In his dedication to Guzman, Nahum Tate says: "The Reputation of Mustapha has been established by all sorts of Spectators and will continue a just Model of Tragedy, as long as the stage shall last."<sup>12</sup> Tate's panegyric, meant no more than a social security, throws an important light on Mustapha. To all intents and purposes it is indeed the "just Model" Tate deems it to be, for, following the examples set forth by Davenant, Dryden and Howard, and some known and unknown Cavalier playwrights, Orrery perfected the heroic hero in his first state of heroism.<sup>13</sup> As in his earlier Henry the Fifth, Orrery chose well known historical personages, ideally suited for heroic deeds and lofty romance. Three male figures in key roles were Betterton as Solyman the Magnificent, Harris and Smith as Mustapha and Zanger. The plot is constructed around



platonic friendship and platonic love versus filial duty. Mustapha and Zanger represent the ultimate in friendship and chivalry. Mustapha is Solyman's heir by his first wife, while Zanger is his younger son by Roxolana. Both brothers swear eternal loyalty to one another; Mustapha, by deciding to repeal the Turkish custom of slaying younger brothers on succession to the throne, and Zanger by vowing not to outlive Mustapha.

The second strain, namely platonic love, involves the two brothers' devotion to and reverence for the Queen of Hungary. While the Queen remains an impervious mourner of her dead husband through the greater part of the play, the brothers try to outdo one another in their chivalrous attempts to gain her approbation.<sup>14</sup> They try to court her within the conventions of the platonic lovers. It is a spiritual rather than physical passion untouched with any idea of that "carnal fruition" referred to by James Howell in the passage quoted earlier:

Zanger:

Deserves her! This all injuries exceeds;  
 Her by your words you wrong, me by your deeds;  
 He of her love unworthy does appear,  
 Who does but think that he can merit her;  
 It may of her, ev'n as of Heaven be said,  
 Which, though attained, is never merited.

(III.i.123-128)

The third strain, filial duty, shows Mustapha and Zanger pitted against their father, Solyman. The conflict derives from Solyman's growing suspicion of his older son's popularity with the army. Mustapha's unerring sense of



virtue, however, keeps him allied with his father and subordinate to his commands until the very end. Zanger's loyalty to his brother creates a rift between him and Roxolana and leads to the double tragedy of the play. The other feminine interest is centred on Roxolana whose ambition for her son, Zanger, advances the plot. It is, ultimately, an account of the victory of chivalry and heroism over a basically unbalanced universe.

Soly:

Fame in her Temple will adorn thy Shrine.

No Roman Glory every equalled thine.

Zanger, in height of Youth for Friendships sake  
Did rather dye than proffer'd Empire take.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •  
Oh Mustapha! the worthy may in thee  
The dang'rous state even of great vertue see.  
Thine was to all the height and compass grown  
That vertue e're could reach to gain renown.

(V.vi.409-412, 419-422)

Mustapha and Zanger, along with Clorimun in The Generall and King Henry and Owen Tudor in Henry the Fifth are the "purest" of heroes created for the English stage.\* It is interesting to examine how a paragon of virtue is created in fiction or drama. Since most of the reading public abhors the "perfect character," and unless he be the satirist's tool like Joseph Andrews or Joseph Surface, this type of hero does not receive much critical attention. Our natural propensity to be slightly contemptuous of

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\*"Pure" heroism here refers to their strict adherence to the principles of love and honour in the French tradition, unmixed with rant which is characteristic of "bombast" heroism, or reflectiveness which is typical of "control" heroism.



"total virtue," especially in males, is testified to by the neglect of Clorimun, Owen Tudor, Zanger or Mustapha, who are promptly classed as stilted or sterile characters. In other words, the artist who takes his perfectly virtuous hero seriously, be it Scott in his creation of Waverly or Davenant with his Altophil or Alphonso, has a short-term appeal to his audience. This trend is apparent in all of Orrery's heroic characters, Mustapha and Zanger being formed from an identical mold. Their utmost decorum is derived from the Corneilian heroes Roderigue in Le Cid and Cinna in the play of the same name. Roderigue's desire to avenge his father's injured honour leads him to reject the equally pressing claim of love. His famous love and honour speech ends with his determination to stick to honour, without which there is no love:

Roderigue:

My father--life and name to him I owe--  
 Whether of grief or from a mortal blow  
 I die, my blood all pure and true I'll shed.  
 . . . . .  
 The flush of shame mounts hotly to my brow,  
 That I can deem it pain  
 To save my father's house.<sup>15</sup>

Mustapha's adherence to his father's will is steadfast, even in the face of death. When Zanger warns him of the duplicity in his father's design, he chooses "duty" over "life."

Mustapha:

If false, I then am but of life bereav'd:  
 'Tis worth my dying to be undeciev'd.  
 And who would with a Father be in strife?



Rather than duty lose, I'll lose my life.  
 (V.ii.79-82)

From Carlell's Arviragus in Arviragus and Philicia and Suckling's Prince in Aglaura, Mustapha and Zanger borrow their excessive chivalry in matters of love. Their relationship with one another as well as with other characters of the play is imbued with a complicated interplay of love and honour. Each one of their trials testifies to their excellent standard of virtue. As paragons of virtue they are put to a test of love or honour at each turn of the plot to prove their worth to the audience. Their constant moral victories expressed with uniform restraint are the hallmark of the "pure" hero.

In their first appearance, Mustapha and Zanger seal a pact for eternal friendship. It becomes clear that this pact will constitute the greatest trial for the heroes. Orrery's interest in male friendship is evident in similar trysts made in almost all of his plays. Here, after striving to outdo one another in vows of friendship they declare:

Mustapha:  
 My vow is seal'd.

Zanger:  
 Mine Friendship shall make good. [They embrace]

Mustapha:  
 Friendship's a stronger tie than that of blood.  
 (I.iii.225-227)

Similar sentiments in other plays bring out an important characteristic of the "pure" hero, namely the high place



accorded to friendship in his scheme of values.

Mennor:

Knowe Friendshipp is a greater tye than blood.  
 (The Generall, I.293)

King Henry:

Friendshipp above all tyes does bind the heart.  
 (Henry the Fifth, IV.288)

Stratonice:

That sacred Friendship which so firm has stood,  
 And joyns us more than Nature does by Blood.  
 (Tryphon, I.251-252)

The Queen of Hungary poses the first problem for the two friends. When Mustapha learns of Zanger's predicament in love, he uses logic to convince the latter to give up his futile suit. The most potent argument is the basic incompatability of love and friendship. Just as the beloved should have the full domain of the heart, so also should the friend. Co-existence is unheard of.

Mustapha:

To me no miracle can greater prove  
 Than seeing Friendship's right resigned to Love;  
 Your Heart once lost your Friendship too must end.

Zanger:

Sure I may have a Mistress and a Friend.  
 The Soul, dear Mustapha, is Friendship's part,  
 And Love for his doth challenge but the heart.

Mustapha:

That's a distinction made by couz'ning Art'  
 Can I your Friendship have, and she your Heart?  
 Such Lovers' Logick is too low for you.  
 (II.v.386-394)

Filled with a sense of injured friendship, Mustapha approaches the lady on behalf of his brother and remains to plead his own case. Before he can advocate for Zanger he needs succour for his own affliction. In frank, open



despair, which is a mark of great souls, he returns to Zanger and makes a complete confession of his encounter with the Queen. Now the logic is reversed to excuse himself (rather than accuse Zanger, as before) on the ground that he was only giving Beauty its due.

Mustapha:

Since all may yield to Worthies without shame.  
None could her force resist, and how could I  
Then chuse but yield, for none can from her flye?

(III.i.90-92)

This "rival friend" dilemma, found in all of Orrery's plays, is undoubtedly derived from a similar content in Cavalier drama. One typical Cavalier theme is the entanglement of two friends (a prince and a "noble stranger") with the same "unknown" lady; while the princess (prince's sister) pines for the "noble stranger." Friends become rivals (the princess and "unknown" lady being friends in their own right) and love clashes with honour. An easy solution is found in revealing a last-minute consanguinity between the virtuous lady and the noble stranger.<sup>16</sup> No such solution is available for Mustapha and Zanger, there being no additional "unknown lady" for the spare brother. The resolution, therefore, makes a greater demand on their respective sensibilities; rivalry in love moving towards a rivalry in magnanimity. Just as each tried to outdo the other in love so also do they compete for the greater magnanimity. In Henry the Fifth Owen Tudor chooses magnanimity over love, and King Henry, though he wins the



lady, admits defeat on the other count. An identical situation is created in The Black Prince. There is a high premium on the hero's ability to make a greater sacrifice than his friend-rival. In an encounter between Mustapha, Zanger and the Queen this situation is given a highly dramatic treatment. After indulging at length in "love's sophistries" the brothers fail to promote their respective interests. The mournful queen, faithful to her dead husband, repulses them in utmost sorrow and offers to go away. Here the "casuist" Mustapha decides to offer his greatest tribute to love, namely to sacrifice his own interest for that of the beloved:

True Friendship, Madam, cannot yield to this;  
If you reject my Love, accept of his;  
Next to your love the blessing I would chuse  
Is that my Friend may gain what I may lose.

(III.iii.395-398)

On witnessing such gallant display of friendship Zanger promptly gives up his own stand and concurs with his brother: "That which he beg'd for me I beg for him" (III. iii.420), and the Queen of Hungary departs weeping.

Friendship is given the highest priority, in most cases higher than kingship. A man must stand by his friend no matter what the circumstance. The second trial of friendship is Mustapha's clash with the Sultan. Solyman's jealousy, combined with Roxolana's efforts to bring about his downfall, builds up a strong case against Mustapha. His only support comes from Zanger who is in fact the sole



beneficiary from all this. In several instances he intercedes on behalf of his brother through Roxolana's good standing with the Sultan, for the revoking of a banishment decree or summons to defend a distant frontier of the Kingdom. In the last instance, when death seems imminent, Mustapha nobly bequeaths his rights to his brother--both of love (Queen) and honour (throne). His last tribute is to their everlasting friendship which has withstood every trial:

How poorly some in Friendship take a pride,  
Which never yet was by Love's int'rest try'd:  
To ours alone the perfect praise is due  
At once of being friends and rivals too.

(IV.iii.502-505)

Since friendship, as mentioned earlier, takes precedence over kingship, Zanger rejects the throne and prefers to make good his pledge by dying alongside Mustapha. On being summoned to witness the sultan's judgement on Mustapha and thereby gain succession to the throne, Zanger outdoes his brother by his last magnanimous act of suicide. His dying tribute to friendship places it beside heaven in its purity and desirability:

The happy wound is given  
That sends my Soul to Mustapha and Heaven.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •  
Lo at your feet, dear Friend, your Brother lies;  
And where he took delight to live--he dyes.

(V.vi.393-394, 407-408)

As noted earlier, two other concerns which are given heroic treatment are filial duty and duty towards the beloved. With respect to the first, there is some influence



of the French notion of devoir. In Le Cid the struggle between amour-devoir and amour-passion is depicted in Roderigue's existential dilemma of two opposing and equally powerful choices. The same conflict is presented by Sir William Davenant in The Unfortunate Lovers, where Amarantha offers the very sword to Altophil which he uses to kill her father, after which she has no choice but to take her own life. In Mustapha, the hero is not faced with such an agonizing choice: Roxolana's intercession on the Queen's behalf takes care of that problem. But filial duty demands absolute obedience, even as it did in the case of Roderigue and Don Deigue. When summoned by the Sultan Mustapha is left with no alternative but to obey. Zanger offers a contrast to the iron relationship of father and son in his flexible relationship with Roxolana. But he too, like Mustapha, prefers to die honourably, fulfilling his pledge for everlasting friendship:

Zanger:

'Twas only love had strength enough t'invade  
 That mutual Friendship which we sacred made:  
 But now o're love I have the conquest got;  
 Though Love divided us yet death shall not . . .  
 (V.vi.388-391)

The heroes' conduct towards their beloved is marked by the highest decorum, each one of the suitors striving to "out-woo" her with extravagant praises of her unparalleled qualities and his own unworthiness. At times the argument is an exercise in the decorous use of wit rather than amorous talk. It becomes an elaborate conceit



when each of the lovers declares the victory of his pride even at the cost of love itself. Here is a grand confusion of "gain" and "loss" concepts:

Alizia:

She has the Happier, I the Nobler part,  
She may possess, but I'll deserve his Heart.

(The Black Prince, I.iv.484-485)

Tudor:

If I her right above my love prefer,  
In that, by losing, I shall merit her.

(Henry the Fifth, II.157-158)

Mustapha:

Only those lovers should be counted true,  
Who noble would, when by their fortune crossed,  
Have others get what to them is lost.

(Mustapha, III.401, 403-404)

Demetrius:

To lose her, yet deserve her, is more fit,  
Than to possess her, and not merit it.

(Tryphon, III.518-519)

Clorimun:

I'll save my rival, and make her confess  
'Tis I deserve what he does but possess.

(The Generall, III.143-144)

Of this last example of "love's sophistry" Pepys records a pert reaction in his diary. It reflects a typical Cavalier response to the idyllic love in Orrery's plays. To Clorimun's brave declaration to deserve if not possess, Sir Charles Sedley, to the great amusement of his audience, declared aloud: "Why, what pox . . . would he have him more, or what is there more to be had of a woman than the possessing her?"<sup>17</sup>

Orrery's dramatic heroes make a distinct advance upon the prevailing Cavalier mode. The glorious concept



of heroic virtue which lay at the root of his characters was the playwright's gift to his sovereign. Heroic stories of the past were devoutly presented by him to "Ornaments of the present." For the Cavalier dramatists eulogy was neither so direct nor crucial. Their heroes were several degrees removed from Orrery's; in love, honour, duty and virtue closer to the prevailing French fashion in their moral grandeur and superhuman nobility. In a spirit of independence from the Cavalier mode, Orrery strove to keep his audience's attention focused on the one hero. In doing this, however, he was not as successful as Dryden who shows a single, all-powerful hero. The Cavalier playwrights did not bother to single out any one of their youthful heroes as a pattern of heroic virtue. In his preface to Orrery's plays Clark cites Davenant's Love and Honour as an example of this. Written twelve years before Orrery's first play, The Generall, it presents three heroes of equal merit in love with the female paragon, Evandra. Imprisonment of their common beloved leads them to long discourses on duty, love, sacrifice. It is difficult to place one above another in degree of importance, so neutral is the playwright's viewpoint. In fact the heroine is paired off with the one we least expect. Similar treatment is given in other frequently restored Cavalier plays like Suckling's Bennoralt, Aglaura or Killigrew's Claracilla. Clorimun in The Generall, however, is a more individualized



figure who leaves no doubt about the identity of the hero. In Mustapha, Zanger is at par with his brother only in the first part of the play. It is essentially Mustapha's heroism which is celebrated by his creator.

The Orreryan hero did not have too many successors. Occasionally one may detect an influence of Clorimun, as in the Roman Generals Honorius and Justinianus in the anonymous Irena (1664), or the friendship motif of Mustapha and Zanger in the princes Montezuma and Acacis in The Indian Queen. But the strictness of French conventions with which Orrery conducted his design was not entirely conducive to the English taste. Like Corneille he avoided direct references to time or place. Similarly incident and action are totally absent in his plays. Dryden's words to support the French austerity seem to prophesy the fate of Orrery's dramatic works on the English stage:

'Tis a great mistake in us to believe that the French present no part of the Action on the Stage: every alteration or crossing of a Design, every new-sprung Passion and turn of it, is a part of the Action and much the noblest; except we conceive nothing to be Action till the Players come to Blows.<sup>18</sup>

Even an ardent playgoer like Pepys could not stand pedants who indulged in platonic sophistries for love-play in a far more tedious fashion than the esoteric characters of Sir John Suckling. Dialectical devices cannot make heroes breed "admiration" in their audiences. Therefore, as I noted earlier, Pepys quietly records his discontent although he continues to record the frequent revivals and full houses



occasioned by the Earl of Orrery's matchless dramatic presentations.

At this juncture Dryden responded to the declining appeal of Gallic chivalries by portraying characters much more vital and less insipid than Orrery's heroes. With Sir Robert Howard he made a beginning in creating the noble savage hero of The Indian Queen. In singling out the hero he went a step farther than Orrery who was still partially burdened with the Cavalier tradition of multi-heroes. But in his conception of Acacis, the Peruvian Prince, and the idyllic friendship between two men he still looked backwards for solutions. Finally, in 1670, when the great debate on "rules" was already over on the continent with Racine taking over from Corneille, Dryden wrote his most important heroic play Almanzor and Almahide or The Conquest of Granada. It was fitting that this play should arise from the controversial issues regarding the norms and directives of tragic plays. This decade is famous for its definitions of the various components of dramatic art. The creation of a new situation or character was invariably accompanied with an explanatory preface which included a definition of the same. Therefore, Almanzor, fashioned from Dryden's own Montezuma and Maximin, called for a definition of the "heroic" hero which was included in "An Essay of Heroic Plays." The play's dedication to the Duke of York prepared for Dryden's forthcoming break from the



Orreryan court tradition. Starting with customary praise of the "real heroes of this chivalrous age" to whom the "feign'd heroes" of heroic poesy must sue for protection, Dryden proceeds to describe his own version of heroism:

I have form'd a hero, I confess, not absolutely perfect, but of an excessive and over-boiling courage . . . the tame hero, who never transgresses the bounds of moral virtue, would shine but dimly in an epic poem . . . But a character of eccentric virtue is the more exact image of human life, because he is not wholly exempted from its frailties. Such a person is Almanzor, whom I present, with all humility, to the patronage of your Royal Highness. I design'd in him a roughness of character, impatient of injuries; and a confidence of himself, almost approaching to an arrogance. But these errors are incidental only to great spirits; they are moles and pimples, which hinder not a face from being beautiful, tho' that beauty be not regular . . .<sup>19</sup>

This was the most logical way of explaining his innovation, namely, by adherence to nature. Dryden's usage of the word "nature" in relation to character formulation refers to the "imperfections" which are a part of the "nature" of every character and should be faithfully copied by the dramatist along with the virtuous parts. The other problem was to do away with the fetters imposed by the French imitators among the English. The best way to undercut the French influence was to take his precedents from the epic heroes of Homer and Virgil. If he drew his character from classical sources he was more likely to be free from critical censure:

The first image I had of him was from the Achilles of Homer; the next from Tasso's Rinaldo (who was a copy of the former,) and the third from the Artaban of Monsieur Calprenède, who has imitated



both. The original of these, Achilles, is taken by Homer for his hero.<sup>20</sup>

With this statement he describes the fiery and impatient nature of Achilles who refused to be governed by his king and general, Agamemnon, in his moment of heroic passion. Similarly did Tasso conceive Rinaldo. Therefore, Dryden argues, if Homer and Tasso disregarded such points of honour to maintain the vrai or truth of the characters why should the new playwrights not profit by their example? Here he clearly points at the Longinian "sublime" where great spirits act in accordance with their greatness, instead of measuring honour by "drachms and scruples." The latter practice, imputed to the French, leads to the statement that: "For my own part, I declare myself for Homer and Tasso, and am more in love with Achilles and Rinaldo than with Cyrus and Oroondates."<sup>21</sup>

Dryden's indebtedness to the Homeric account of the wrath of Achilles and its effect on the fortunes of Troy is apparent in his treatment of Almanzor. That he is the "contemner of kings" and "performs impossibilities" is only a part of the largeness of mind which is an essential attribute of all heroic heroes in Dryden. In a discussion of the Drydenesque hero it must be made clear that most of them possess common characteristics. This was easily recognized by his contemporaries from the identical declamatory treatment given to all stage presentations of his heroes. In 1687 Martin Clifford observed sarcastically



that he was strangely mistaken if he had not seen Almanzor previously in some disguise: "Prithee tell me true, was not this huff-cap once the Indian Emperor and at another time did he not call himself Maximine?"<sup>22</sup> In tracing the career of the heroic hero my proposed treatment of Almanzor and Antony must of necessity include Montezuma, Aurengzebe and Don Sebastian. Whereas basic similarities exist in all his heroes, Almanzor and Antony represent for me the pinnacles of two heroic orders in Dryden's plays. The former is more obviously "the seventeenth century Superman" to quote Waith, while the latter, though no less endowed with super qualities, has a quietness which is responsible for Kaufmann's celebrating him as "the dying God Antony."<sup>23</sup>

Almanzor's first appearance, amid the clash of two warring factions, the Zegrays and the Abencerrages, defines his role as the protagonist. His very first decision to support the Abencerrages is made wilfully: in the face of the rightful ruler he openly asserts himself in making independent decisions. An open challenge to the divine right of monarchy (although in a Moorish guise) was permissible only under very stringent conditions. These are fulfilled in the origins of the offender who recognizes no civil or political order to circumscribe his will. He is, like Montezuma before him, a foundling brought up to recognize only the natural order which is synonymous with his own will. Whereas Montezuma is closer to the



traditional heroes of epic songs and legends who bred in caves and fought the whelp, Almanzor cannot boast of such primeval origins. Although the phrase "noble savage" originates with him, and some critics prefer to call him a "noble barbarian," he is much more worldly wise and "city-bred" than the Peruvian and Mexican "heathens" of Dryden's earlier plays. To Boabdelin he declares his sovereignty when the latter orders his guards to arrest him:

Almanzor:

Obey'd as sovereign by thy subjects be,  
But know that I alone am King of me.  
I am as free as nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

(I.i.43)

Boabdelin makes the Hobbesian reply that mankind must unite to crush such a powerful, common foe. The law of the jungle must be overcome by civilized people by a rational social contract.

Boabdelin:

Away, and execute him instantly.

Almanzor:

Stand off; I have not leisure yet to die.

(I.i.44)

With this bold assertion he secures for himself an unlimited heroic license whereby similar excesses are easily excused by the readers, moreso because his heroic drives are magnanimous. He takes sides with the Abencerrages because he "thinks" they are oppressed. Similarly, he deserts the King because the latter refuses to redeem his pledge of



honour to free the Duke of Arcos. Personal gain has no dominion over the "natural" man who disdains the civilized quest of power for its own sake. A better example of this is the final scene in The Indian Emperor when Guyomar and Alibech leave the Spanish colonizers to enjoy the peace and tranquility of their self-imposed exile:

Guyomar:

We to our selves, will all our wishes grant;  
And nothing coveting can nothing want.

(V.ii.410)

Almanzor possesses a similar detachment which enables him to watch over his "conquests" with a godly eye, disdaining to become embroiled in their affairs. Thus he can loftily declare to Almahide his utter disregard for actual possession when his slightest whim can disarm princes:

Almanzor:

I am but while I please, a private man;  
I have that soul which empires first began.  
From the dull crowd which every King does lead  
I will pick out whom I will choose to head:  
The best and bravest souls I can select,  
And on their conquer'd necks my throne erect.

(IV.ii.97)

The king-maker, says Kirsch, is nobody's subject. Richard Leigh in his Remarks on the Humours and Conversations of the Town (1673) made an ironic indictment of the morality of Conquest of Granada, on this very issue of Almanzor's lawlessness:

. . . Almanzor was neither Mr. Dryden's Subject nor Boabdelin's, but equally exempt from the Poetic Rules and the Prince's laws; in short if his revolting from the Abencerrages to the Zegrays and from the Zegrays to the Abencerrages again, had not equally satisfied



both parties, it might admit of the same defence, Mr. Dryden's Outcries and his tumults did, that the Poet represented Men in a Hobbian state of war.<sup>24</sup>

His indictment was carried farther in 1688 when it was argued by some writers that the "whole design of heroic tragedy was calculated to exalt libertinism and immorality at the expense of Christian virtues."<sup>25</sup> Finally in 1688 it was suggested that for his "lawless Maximines of the Theatre" Dryden should be sent "grazing to Malmesbury Common, among some of Mr. Hobbe's well-bred Citizens."<sup>26</sup>

Critical censure by the purists did not deter the audience from admiring Almanzor and his prototypes. As I suggested earlier, this was Dryden's solution to the growing disenchantment of poets and critics with French practices, especially as they were reproduced in the plays of Roger Boyle. This should not suggest that there was no influence here of Corneilian and Cavalier drama. In his study of the Herculean hero, Waith suggests that Almanzor is compounded of preciosité which directs his programme of Honour, Valour and Love and the Cavalier notion of "gentlemanly hero," who was not too different from the former, only of native growth. The preciosité found in L'Astree needed a more congenial interpretation than than that given it by Orrery. He, it seems, transplanted the platonic love cult on the native soil without regulating its atmosphere or growth. Dryden provided a more genial climate by a gradual transplant, testing at each point its



chances of success. In The Conquest of Granada he completed the experiment but it took him almost twenty years of studying the course of heroic poetry to present it in its final form before a receptive audience.

In his prefatory essay Dryden declares Love and Valour to be the rightful subjects of heroic plays. The hero should be a perfect component of these two qualities. The word "perfect" is used with some reservation because the increased emphasis on "natural representation" precluded "perfection" which was more to the French taste. Dryden's hero Almanzor must be examined on the basis of these two preponderant qualities to bring out the contrast between the "pure" and heroic hero. The valourous part of Dryden's hero has been touched upon above. Kirsch, in his study of Dryden's heroic plays, brings out interesting similarities between Dryden and Corneille's valourous heroes. In Corneille's Don Roderigue the predominant sentiment la gloire embraces three distinct orders: society, power and personal worth. Of this the last is most important because it depends upon absolute obedience to an inner law. Similarly "virtue and "duty" do not refer to Christian ethics but to gloire and grandeur. Thus devoir is not moral obligation but obligation to the self. Corneille uses words like estime, merite and generosité which are an expression of personal glory. Most of these qualities are equally applicable to Dryden's Almanzor, who seems to echo



Auguste's words in Cinna, when he declares true sovereignty in the face of a legal sovereign:

Auguste:

Je suis maître du moi comme de l'univers.

Almanzor:

But know that I alone am King of me.

Therefore it can be easily surmised that self aggrandizement is the leit motif of honour. The social responsibility is implied only inasmuch as it conforms to the idea of personal glory. Fujimura's analysis of honour provides an excellent summary of Almanzor's stand. He begins by defining honour as an "essentially naturalistic notion," in that it represents neither a spiritual nor a moral ideal but a personal commitment to gloire. Honour is regarded in its most idealistic sense as a quality of the most magnanimous mind. Fujimura considers this quality "seemingly idealistic" for in its ultimate analysis he feels that it is precisely this idealistic notion that is ridiculed in favour of a more naturalistic definition. Almanzor's declaration that "Honour is what myself I owe" comes closest to the Restoration idea. However one may interpret honour, it does not take from the appearance of magnanimity in the hero which is attested to again and again by his deeds as well as by other characters in the play. Almahide's first appraisal of him bespeaks this quality:

Mark but how terrible his eyes appear!  
And yet there is something roughly noble there,  
Which, in unfashioned nature looks divine



And, like a gem, does in the quarry shine.

(III.i.70)

Fujimura refers to this "unpolished diamond" quality in Almanzor which is easily perceived by all who come into contact with him. Earlier Abdalla describes him to the King in a more explicit recognition of these qualities:

Vast is his courage, boundless in his mind,  
Rough as a storm, and humorous as wind:  
Honour's the only idol of his eyes:

(I.i.45)

Several other aspects of the honour code as defined by Fujimura are present in Almanzor.<sup>27</sup> Honour is directly related to an obligation or a favour received. This may go against duty, which in this case is regarded as idle social convention. Almanzor changes sides in accordance with his current obligation just as Montezuma does before him. When Boabdelin refuses the Duke of Arcos' freedom, he switches loyalties to Abdalla. When Abdalla prefers Zulema's suit for Almahide to his own, he returns to the Royal Camp once more. At one point Abdalla protests against his disregard of the divine right of Kings, to which Almanzor replies:

I only speak of him,  
Whom pomp and greatness sit so loose about,  
That he wants majesty to fill 'em out.

(III.i.60)

Thus he can justify himself even to the royal spectators in the boxes, none of whom considered himself thus loosely clad! Another aspect of honour, namely its identification with friendship, is present in Almanzor's alliance with



Abdalla. Here again it goes contrary to duty as does Acacis' alliance with Montezuma in The Indian Queen. That his friendship is of a much shorter duration is evidence of the inconsistency of the others rather than of himself. Once he has pledged his support to a friend's cause he needs no evidence of its justness:

It is sufficient that you make the claim;  
You wrong our friendship when your right you name.  
When for myself I fight, I weigh the cause,  
But friendship will admit of no such laws.

(III.i.59)

Unbounded generosity in matters of friendship makes a like demand on the receiver. Abdalla's mean response engenders a godlike disdain in Almanzor's boundless mind which is untutored to the small ways of men. He is condemned in the same spirit with which he was once befriended:

Almanzor:

If from thy hands alone my death can be,  
I am immortal and a god to thee.  
If I would kill thee now, thy fate's so low,  
But I must stoop ere I can give the blow.

(III.i.77)

Where the code of honour is absolute it must preclude standards of justice and morality. This practice made imperative the need for a super-sensual being (even like Yeats' human-beast form out of Spiritus Mundi) as the heroic protagonist.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, Dryden introduced what Fujimura refers to as cultural primitivism in all his heroic heroes. Their ethnic origins are offered as a daring contrast to the civilized gentlemanliness of Orrery's heroes. In his "Essay of Heroic Plays" Dryden refers



proudly to the poet's right to lose himself in "visionary objects" instead of remaining tied down to conventional representations:

An heroic poet is not tied to a bare representation of what is true, or exceedingly probable; but that he may let himself loose to visionary objects and to the representation of such things as . . . may give him a freer scope for imagination.<sup>29</sup>

Dryden's belief in the Longinian theory led him to criticize the French for all their excessive adherence to verismilitude rather than to the "natural." In his preface to All for Love he speaks of Corneille's Monsieur Hippolyte who is conceived on so polite a principle that rather than make the audience laugh and cry, out of pure good manners he puts them to sleep. This is hardly an indication of the poetic frenzy with which characters should be conceived. In order to achieve this freedom and naturalistic growth for his heroes, Dryden uses non-Christian settings where they express their emotions and passions in a much less inhibited manner. Fujimura considers the modern world escape to south seas analogous to Dryden's quest for a naturalistic setting. Montezuma in The Indian Queen and The Indian Emperor, Guyomar in The Indian Emperor, together with Almanzor are free to express their natural instincts without being subjected to the strict decorum imposed upon Alphonso in The Siege of Rhodes, Altophil in The Unfortunate Lovers and Clorimun in The Generall. The best indication of this freedom is



in Almanzor's words when he declares to his "civilized" companions the crystal clear quality of his mind that makes for an uninhibited display of emotions and freedom of action which must be regarded with respect by the confused, cluttered minds that surround him:

My kindness and my hate unmask'd I wear;  
For friends to trust and enemies to fear.  
My heart's so plain  
That men on every passing thought may look,  
Like fishes gliding in a crystal brook;  
When troubled most, it does the bottom show;  
'Tis weedless all above, and rockless all below.

(IV.i.79)

Here the naturalistic imagery and antithetical balance of words (kindness, hate; enemies, friends; above, below) show clarity of mind and straight-forwardness of expression.

In this context of individual freedom love takes on a different dimension. Its importance as a counterfoil to honour is never lost sight of. But the original concept of love is drastically altered by the heroic hero. In French romances love was cette belle passion . . . la plus noble cause de toute les actions heroique.<sup>30</sup> This was carried into the French heroic drama with a slightly reduced emphasis on love. The nature of love, as stated earlier, was strictly platonic. The heroic hero in Dryden's plays gives a sexual dimension to love, which, again, is so garbed in grandiose diction that it sometimes escapes notice. Fujimura sums up the co-ordinates of love and honour as "passional commitment[s] to sex and self-aggrandisement."<sup>31</sup> Just as honour is a quality



apprehended only by great minds, so only the most generous and noble minds are susceptible to love. The sexual aspect of heroic love has been stressed variously by Kirsch, Fujimura and Osborn in their analyses of heroic love.<sup>32</sup> Kirsch draws upon several contemporary sources to prove that Almanzor was regarded as a libertine by some of his audience. Leigh in his Remarques makes the allegation that "some of Almanzor's characteristics may be far closer to those of the gallants who viewed him from the pit than the grandeur of the heroic play could lead us to expect."

It is but framing the character of a Huff of the Town, one that from breaking Glass windows and combating the watch, sets up an Heroe . . . shew he is of the same stamp with Achilles and Rinaldo, then tame the Savage with the charming sight of the King's Daughter (or wife) whom this St. George is to deliver from the Dragon or greater dangers . . .<sup>33</sup>

Kirsch who does not subscribe to this view concludes on the moderate note that the heroic hero is neither a libertine nor a convert to platonism. He sees him closer to the Cornélian than the Racinian hero in his regard for love as a proof of individual worth. In other words Almanzor's desire for Almahide is seen as a desire for a possession rather than a person. Although Kirsch's analysis is upheld by Almanzor's very words, "She must be chaste because she's loved by me" (which he utters with confidence on hearing of her unfaithfulness), perhaps it is the passive voice "because she's loved by me" that is responsible for this interpretation. In view of Fujimura's



idea of "cultural primitivism" I cannot fully subscribe to Kirsch's viewpoint. Almanzor's declaration here is perfectly consistent with his declarations elsewhere, which spring from his ethical and cultural primitivism.

However he expresses it, the heroic hero is excessively susceptible to love. Abdalla introduces Almanzor with the prophetic words: "The charms of beauty like a pest he flies." We know that only the one who flies beauty is worthy of Vulcan's net. For the heroic hero love descends suddenly and there it remains in conflict with all other loyalties.<sup>34</sup> Here again the "pure" or Cornelian hero is sharply differentiated. His code is primarily an honour code: Corneille did not consider love worthy of rubbing shoulders with honour. "Dignity of tragedy" he says in an Examen "demands some great interest of the state, or some passion more noble and more masculine than love . . . love must content itself with the second place in the poem . . ." To St. Evremond he writes, "I have believed till now that love is too weak a passion to be dominant in an heroic play. I prefer it served as an ornament and not as a body of work . . ."<sup>35</sup> In view of this Almanzor cannot be classed with any of the purist-heroes discussed above. The best example of the importance given to love in Dryden's plays is Queen Isabel's eulogy to love in The Conquest of Granada which may be taken as the view put forth by the entire play:



Love's a heroic passion which can find  
 No room in any base, degenerate mind:  
 It kindles all the soul with honor's fire,  
 To make the lover worthy his desire.

(Part II, I.i.128)

The various scenes between Almanzor and Almahide prove the predominantly sexual desire of the hero. In their very first encounter Almanzor characteristically lays bare his aspiration, desire and rationale for her love. Unlike the brothers Mustapha and Zanger, who never question the Hungarian Queen's devotion to a dead husband, Almanzor positively disproves the right of a living husband: Boabdelin is merely a legal possessor who must abdicate when the true lover comes along:<sup>36</sup>

Almanzor:

I bring a claim which does his right remove;  
 You're his by promise, but you're mine by love.  
 . . . . .  
 Fate gave not to Boabdelin that pow'r;  
 He woo'd you but as my ambassador.

(III.i.73)

It is characteristic for all heroes to love at first sight; Almanzor's "stung with some tarantula" is the customary use of hyperbole, which some have interpreted as Dryden's parody and exaggeration of the conventional psychology of love. In the second memorable encounter he secures her permission to sue for her hand. Her lack of ready compliance induces another hyperbolical utterance in which he threatens to pursue her as a ghost in her marriage bed. His use of logic may be a nod at French practices, but it seems more likely a parody than an imitation:



**Almanzor:**

When in your lover's arms you sleep at night,  
 I'll glide in cold betwixt, and seize my right  
 And isn't not better, in your nuptial bed  
 To have a living lover than a dead?

(IV.ii.96)

Here one is strongly reminded of Donne's similar usage in "The Apparition."<sup>37</sup> The similarities between Donne's and Dryden's irreverent lovers are too striking to be incidental. Price, in his To the Palace of Wisdom refers to Almanzor's arrogating to himself a virtue superior to that of the gods in his ultimate sacrifice for his beloved, which sounds distinctly like Donne's canonized lovers. The same analogy is used by Price for the lovers Antony and Cleopatra whose love has a metaphysical rigor where "intensity outmeasures duration, and bondage to each other makes them monarchs."<sup>38</sup>

Almahide comprehends his vast soul, which complements the narrow confines of her own. This is also interpreted by Waith as the disorderliness in him which is tempered by her love of peace and quiet. Her response to him is characteristic of this:

Great souls discern not when the leap's too wide,  
 Because they only view the farther side.  
 Whatever you desire, you think is near;  
 But with more reason the event I fear.

(IV.ii.96)

Even while directing his unbounded energies, Almahide falls prey to his irresistible ruggedness. This foreshadows Indamora's attraction to her would-be seducer, Morat. Like Almahide she recognizes the extent of his soul and cannot



but be influenced by it:

Yours is a Soul irregularly great,  
Which wanting temper, yet abounds with heat:  
So strong yet so unequal pulses beat.

(V.i.281)

St. Catherine in Tyrannic Love introduces order in the unbalanced world of Maximin even while remaining coldly detached from it. In this concern Almahide and Indamora are also different from the rigid task mistresses of Orrery like Altemera and the Queen of Hungary, and the innumerable pathfinders like Francina and Symphrona in George Cartwright's Heroick Lover and the indefatigable Evandra and Melora of Davenant's Love and Honour. In making the habitually pristine heroine susceptible to his heroes, Dryden makes a marked innovation. Almahide's realization of this is marked by a startling confession which, I think, is possible only in a non-Christian context. When, at Almanzor's bold request for her hand, Boabdelin orders Almanzor's death, Almahide's physical reaction shows all the symptoms of the conventional disorder preceding a declaration of love. Finally to Boabdelin:

Almahide:

Yet I declare, and to the world will own,  
That far from seeking, I would shun the throne,  
And with Almanzor lead an humble life:  
There is a private greatness in his wife.

(V.ii.110)

To herself she can be more analytical about her feelings. His roughness has textured her smooth, calm and ordered soul. Her acceptance of this is an evidence of the wisdom



that the invincible hero imparts even to the most coherent mind in the play:

How blest was I before this fatal day,  
When all I knew of love, was to obey!  
'Twas life becalm'd without a gentle breath;  
Tho' not so cold, yet motionless as death;  
A heavy quiet state; but love, all strife,  
All rapid is the hurricane of life.

(V.ii.110)

In the same vein she accuses Almanzor of wanting to devour her like a greedy cormorant. But she realizes, as do the others, that his godlike appetite cannot be satiated with platonic reassurances. In the second part of the play when he is recalled by her to defend Boabdelin's tottering empire, his desire for her is unhampered by the fact that she is now married and must uphold her vows if only to justify her position as the Empress. In Almanzor, however, all the physical symptoms of repressed desire are present. His state is an appropriate illustration of Scott Osborn's thesis on Dryden's treatment of love as being based on the medical and moral theories of the seventeenth century school of humors, physiology and psychology.<sup>39</sup> He describes himself as "fever'd," "famished," "tortured." His self-mastery over his emotions in his decision to stay and serve her is the ultimate sacrifice of the lover which is comparable to Mustapha's sacrifice to his own love for the welfare of his beloved. Love, in such instances, becomes identified with honour and duty:



**Almanzor:**

Spite of myself I'll stay, fight, love, despair,  
And I can do all this because I dare.

(Part II, II.iii.154)

When in the temptation scene he confronts her openly with his desire, his is no base assault like Zulema's or pleading like Abdelmelech's for Lyndaraxa. His desire is lofty; like Jove's for Leda or Semele. Almahide's refusal of him is more self-denial than a measure of austerity. He is scornful of her plea for honour:

**Almanzor:**

These, madam, are the maxims of the day,  
When honour's present and when love's away.  
The duty of poor honour were too hard,  
In arms all day, at night to mount the guard.  
Let him, in pity, not to rest retire;  
And these soft hours be watch'd with warm desire.

(Part II, IV.iii.192)

Finally she is led to confess the equal measure of her own desire:

**Almahide:**

Rise, rise and do not empty hopes pursue;  
Yet think that I deny myself not you.

(Part II, IV.iii.193)

The libertine desire of Almanzor at this time is matched only by Lyndaraxa's desire for him. But while she is regarded a creature of appetites,<sup>40</sup> Almanzor's "one great soul" cannot but feel every emotion in its entirety.

Therefore he expresses himself in luxuriant diction that foreshows similar usage in All for Love:

If words so much disorder'd give offense,  
My love's too full of zeal to think of sense,  
Be you like me; dull reason hence remove,  
And tedious forms, and give a loose to love.



Love eagerly let us be gods tonight;  
And do not with half yielding dash delight.

(Part II, IV.iii.193)

Almahide's role as a catalyst to order the boundless energy of the hero bears only the slightest resemblance to the French or Orreryan practice. Her position is not infallible like that of Altemera, for instance, as also the "material" she has to work with is a "rough gem" rather than the perfection symbol of Cavalier drama. Almanzor's acceptance of the Christian ethics confines him within a social and religious framework. Perhaps he ends somewhat as Mustapha and Zanger began in their unquestioned acceptance of political, familial and social responsibilities. Benzayda and Osmyn, "the perfect patterns of virtue" in Conquest of Granada, are of the same mould as Mustapha and Zanger. Almanzor, however, is deliberately excluded from this category. In his "irregularity" he is made to outshine them. His roughness, impatience and self confidence, approached by none save Morat in Aurengzebe, are therefore qualities incidental only to great spirits. His last pronouncement "Live and reign, Great Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain" seems incongruous with his earlier tone of voice unless it be taken as another instance of his volatile enthusiasm. The play ends on the identical note of Corneille's Le Cid when the hero is sent forth to "pursue victories" while the heroine fulfills her year-long mourning period. This cold French remedy is



livened by his parting comment on Almahide's false modesty:

Almanzor:

'Tis but the wax whose seals on virgins stay:  
Let it approach love's fire 'twill melt away.

(Part II, V.iv.222)

The audience's reaction to the heroic hero was unanimous: men and women alike revelled in and admired his feats of love and honour. Addison's remark in The Spectator of April 16, 1711, expresses the eighteenth century female audience's response to Almanzor and his fellows:

The ladies are wonderfully pleased to see a man insulting Kings, or affronting the Gods, in one scene and throwing himself at the feet of his mistress in another. Let him behave himself insolently before the men, and abjectly towards the fair one, it is ten to one but he proves a favorite of the boxes. Dryden and Lee in several of their tragedies have practised this with good success.<sup>41</sup>

Almanzor's appeal for his audience lies in the flattering picture of heroism that he presents, which every courtier could secretly attribute to himself. Dryden's comment in his dedication that only heroes can appreciate heroic poetry--"Heroes may lawfully be delighted by their own praises, both as they are farther incitements to their virtue, and as they are the highest returns which mankind can make them for it"<sup>42</sup>--also added to their self image. Another important reason for his popularity is what Fujimura refers to as the "Restoration gentleman" quality in Almanzor. This view is supported by



Waith who regards him as having "some qualities of a seventeenth century gentleman."<sup>43</sup> I heartily concur with this viewpoint for, as I stated in my proposal, beneath his pagan, eastern, exotic mask the heroic hero is in fact the Restoration gentleman epitomising politeness and decorum. In the case of Almanzor this decorum, though less explicit, is nevertheless present. Therefore even as he strides both worlds he still defines his age.<sup>44</sup>

Fujimura develops this idea further when he says that:

Almanzor though a child of nature is at the same time a Restoration gentleman. The cultural primitivism of Dryden's plays is hardly authentic, and whether the primitive hero is an Aztec like Montezuma or a Moor like Almanzor, he still retains some of the attitudes common to the Restoration audience and he talks like a Restoration courtier.<sup>45</sup>

It seems to me that both qualities are present in Almanzor. The cultural primitivism may be an escape mechanism and he may not be the real noble savage, as Fairchild points out, but he still corresponds to Fujimura's idea of the "popular hero of song and story who fights for love and glory." The other quality which attests to this gentlemanliness is a courtly chivalrous demeanour with which he intersperses his naturalistic behaviour.

In his third stage of heroism, to which I referred as the "control stage," the hero already shows signs of the decline. As opposed to the "pure" and heroic hero the protagonist of the "control" stage may be referred to as



the "tragic hero." Retaining the heroic proportions of his earlier counterparts, he introduces the concept of "tragedy" in heroism. Neither Orrery's nor Dryden's more obviously heroic drama ended on a tragic note. Similarly the spirit of tragedy is alien to Corneille's plays. Therefore when Dryden conceived of his last two heroic protagonists Antony and Don Sebastian he moved closer to the Racinian tragic concept. In his preface and prologue to Aurengzebe he clearly indicated the direction towards which he was moving. Two claims made at this point were fulfilled in All for Love. The first related to the fact that he wished to move away from the heroic play to an exploration of the ideals set forth by Rapin, Boileau and Le Bossu. Being tired of the controversies introduced by Rymer and his courtly followers he declares: "I desire to be no longer the Sisyphus of the stage to roll up a stone with endless labour, (which, to follow the proverb, gathers no moss) and which is perpetually falling down again." In the second instance he declares his intention to abandon rhyme in order to give freer scope to his imagination.

And to confess a truth, (tho' out of time,) [He] Grows weary of his long lov'd mistress Rhyme. Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound, And nature flies him like enchanted ground.<sup>46</sup>

The changing critical stand of the French is reflected again in Dryden's preface to All for Love. He often refers to the "excellency of the moral" and to the



"crimes of love" committed by the lovers Antony and Cleopatra. This emphasis was no doubt due to Le Bossu's contention that drama is a "moral fable." The predominance of passion over reason, which is the factor most influential in diminishing the hero, is due again to the changed French stand that love is now the proper subject for drama. Against Rymer's claim that there is no source of tragedy but pity and terror, Dryden quotes Rapin's defence of love. Similarly the accent on "compassion" instead of la mervellieuse and admiration is a direct result of the teaching of Boileau and Bossu. All of this emphasis is reflected in what some consider his greatest tragedy, All for Love. Some critics like Bruce King claim that the play misses its greatness "because its main concern is rather with raising the spectators' emotions than with the inspection of life";<sup>47</sup> it diminishes in interest because of its appeal to emotion. This view is worth examining in the context of the changed status of the hero and its effect on the entire body of work.

Dryden's oft-quoted definition of a hero, written to defend his Antony, is worth quoting again as a basis for analyzing this change:

All reasonable men have long since concluded, that the hero of a poem ought not to be a character of perfect virtue, for then he could not without injustice, be made unhappy; nor yet altogether wicked, because he could not then be pitied.<sup>48</sup>

This was the premise upon which Dryden based his



characterization of Antony. He would draw him only as favourably as Plutarch, Appian and Dion Cassius would give him leave to do. That their hero's crimes were voluntary was a historical fact which could not be tampered with. The French habit of interfering with nature to reduce their characters to mere formulae is heavily censured by Dryden. He would rather be judged by the laws of his own country than be tried and condemned by French standards for adhering closely to nature's precepts.

Minturno's remarks in Arté Poetica are worth repeating in their relevance to Dryden's Antony. He says: "whoever suffers a marvellous thing, if it is horrifying or causes compassion will not be outside the scope of tragedy."<sup>49</sup> Waith draws the reader's attention to the word "marvellous" in his analysis of the Herculean hero. This concept of "marvellous," being applicable to good or bad alike, applies to the dejected state of Antony at the beginning of the play. Like Almanzor, Antony too is a warrior of great stature who goes against the mores and morals of society on a self-willed, self-chosen path. But unlike Almanzor whose heroism on the battlefield is the talk of the town Antony's heroism is a past event when the play opens. Almanzor identifies love with valour, never giving precedence to either. Antony is divided between Egypt and Rome, symbolizing the contending forces of love and honour; the very title of the play indicates



which way his choice will fall. The heroism of Antony, though a past event, is attested to again and again by his Roman faction. Ventidius' description of Antony even before his first entry sets the heroic image in proper perspective:

Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow  
For his vast soul.

(I.i.347)

The "irregular greatness" implied here by Ventidius puts Antony in line with Almanzor and Morat. Like them he cannot be confined within virtue's narrow bounds. Throughout the play Ventidius acts as a "firing agent," putting Antony in mind of his responsibilities and former glory. Dryden uses him to build up the warrior image of Antony since none of his actions seems to justify it. In this respect Ventidius' role is similar to Dorax's in Don Sebastian, whose descriptions of the defeated king recall some of his past glory. Most of Antony's heroic energy, then, comes from external sources. Ventidius' extravagant description has a twofold purpose, to stimulate the hero as well as the audience.

But you, ere love misled your wandering eyes,  
Were sure the chief and best of human race,  
Framed in the very pride and boast of nature;  
So perfect that the Gods, who formed you, wondered  
At their own skill, and cried--A lucky hit  
Has mended our design. Their envy hindered,  
Else you had been immortal, and a pattern,  
When Heaven would work for ostentation's sake,  
To copy out again.

(I.i.358)

Dryden's own preference for this scene beyond any others in



the play may be due to the fact that "never again are we so completely in the warrior's world."<sup>50</sup> Sebastian and Dorax's similar exchanges in Don Sebastian are always dominated by the former's neo-stoicism which disdains the demands of temporal glory. Ventidius by his frequent references to rugged heroism in "scarr'd cheeks," "sunburnt faces" and "chopp'd hands" is able to instil a temporary fervour in the placid hero. Antony's first staggering on to the stage is a marked contrast to the militant bearing he assumes after Ventidius is done with him:

Antony:

Oh, thou hast fired me; my soul's up in arms,  
And mans each part about me: Once again  
That noble eagerness of fight has seized me.

(I.i.359)

In the same spirit he confronts Cleopatra with the accusation of unmanning him. It has been rightly observed that the first part of this play is entirely dominated by Ventidius. Here Antony sounds exactly like Ventidius in his chiding of Cleopatra:

While within your arms I lay,  
The world fell mouldering from my hands each hour,  
And left me scarce a grasp--I thank your love for 't.  
(II.i.371)

The same sentiment as expressed in the line "world fell mouldering" is reversed to compliment the beloved later on in the play. Although Ventidius employs one stratagem after another to subdue love for valour, each time love is the victor. The balance tilts in Cleopatra's favour and in a forceful torrent of words Antony declares the



ascendancy of his passion:

Die! rather let me perish; loosened nature  
 Leap from its hinges, sink the props of heaven,  
 And fall the skies, to crush the nether world!  
 My eyes, my soul, my all!

(II.i.375-376)

The change from the "heroic" to the "tragic" hero becomes apparent at this point. Dryden's use of cosmic imagery to describe Antony's passion testifies to the largeness of his soul in comprehending the grand emotion of love, for which the world is well lost. Kaufmann's description of the lovers symbolised by great antediluvian creatures panting on the overflowing shores of the Nile, whose overswelling passion is equally outmoded and equally doomed, refers to the "heroism" of their love.<sup>51</sup> The perfect balance created in the hero's soul in Conquest of Granada is overweighted completely on the side of love. Antony, like Sebastian after him, begins to realize the extent to which he is committed to this passion. To Ventidius' remonstration at his first vacillation he says:

Give to your boy, your Caesar,  
 The rattle of a globe to play withal,  
 This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:  
 I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra.

(II.i.376)

A similar sentiment is expressed by Sebastian when asked by Dorax and Alvarez to accept the Portuguese crown after renouncing Almeyda:

O never, never: I am past a Boy,  
 A Scepter's but a plaything, and a Globe  
 A bigger bounding stone. He who can leave



Almeyda, may renounce the rest with ease.

(V.i.463)

Waith in his analysis of Antony's vacillation observes that Ventidius divides him into "erring man" and "more than man." But he, as well as other characters in the play, recognizes that virtue and vice are distinctions of secondary importance in "so vast a soul." It is the impossibility of confining his spirit, Waith thinks, which is the essence of his heroic individuality. I agree with this viewpoint and take it a step farther with the idea that Ventidius' "division" of Antony, which relates to his "erring" or Egyptian side and superhuman or Roman side, is, in fact, reversed in the personality make-up of the hero. What Ventidius considers a weakness and therefore dutifully "cures" is in fact his greatest strength and vice versa. It is only when Antony realizes the various implications of his choice that warring elements within him are stilled. This is what the play is all about. When, after the first reconciliation, the hero is brought a step closer to this realization, he still engages in a scene of nostalgic heroism. This shows that a part of him is still longing for Ventidius' world. But every yearning in that direction is balanced by the stronger force of love. The heroic diction of his first lines here sets off the antithetical feminine sounds of his last:

Suppose me come from the Phlegraen plains,  
Where gasping giants lay, cleft by my sword



And mountain-tops paired off each other blow,  
To bury those I slew . . .

. . . . .  
There's no satiety of love in thee:  
Enjoyed, thou still art new; perpetual spring  
Is in thy arms; the ripened fruit but falls,  
And blossoms rise to fill its empty place  
And I grow rich by giving.

(III.i.378)

Kaufmann and Waith, in their studies of All for Love, see Antony as a prototype of the middle-aged hero. Waith compares him to Samson in Milton's Samson Agonistes, especially in the scene where Ventidius, like Manoa, warns him against being overjust with himself. Kaufmann sees resemblances to Prometheus Bound, Oedipus at Colonus, and The Master Builder. In deepening the tragic impression the writer must do away with excessive heroism. The more excessive the heroism the less chance there is for great tragedy. Often heroic drama precludes a tragic ending. Antony and Sebastian as opposed to Montezuma and Almanzor are tragic heroes. Therefore their unheroic state is stressed at several points. From the beginning Antony is shown as immobilized by sin, age, excess. Alexas refers to him as "mighty ruins," Ventidius to his "noble ruin" and Antony refers to himself as "shadow of an emperor." Like Castalio in The Orphan he throws himself on the ground in an uncontrolled expression of grief. The gentleman and Ventidius comment variously on his raving and "desperate sloth miscalled philosophy." In utter defiance of the heroic image, Dryden allows Ventidius to



show Antony as the first anti-hero of heroic tragedy:

Ventidius:

Yours, he would say, in your declining age,  
 When no more heat was left but what you forced,  
 When all the sap was needful for the trunk,  
 When it went down, then you constrained the course,  
 And robbed from nature, to supply desire;  
 In you (I would not use so harsh a word)  
 'Tis but plain dotage.

(III.i.384)

Out of their context, these lines would seem intended for the old Emperor in Aurengzebe. It is Antony's realization of the partial truth of these judgements, that makes them consistent with his heroic image. This self-realization gives tragic dimension to Ventidius' blunt speech. To Dollabella he says:

Antony:

Thou hast what's left of me;  
 For I am now so sunk from what I was,  
 Thou find'st me at my lowest water-mark.  
 The rivers that ran in, and raised my fortunes,  
 Are all dried up or take another course:  
 What I have left is from my native spring;  
 I've still a heart that swells, in scorn of fate,  
 And lifts me to my banks.

(III.i.382)

It is the contrast between "dryness" and "overswelling" that is responsible for the complexity of the tragic hero. Kaufman sees in him:

... a hero whose very brilliance in excess had more or less legitimized itself through its grandeur, and whose faults, looking upon this man of action's pathetic and helpless efforts at conscious appraisal of his moral responsibilities, others are more ready to forgive than he is himself.<sup>52</sup>

Ventidius, Octavia and Dollabella's attempts to revivify him form the central agon of the play. Each one



of them sees the heroic potential, but none can comprehend the greatness of a soul that is capable of anything; from the mad, pastoral ravings of the first act to the stoic resignation at the end. Price in his To the Palace of Wisdom comments upon the generosity of his love--"I grow rich by giving"--which creates paradise for the lovers even in their prison and is beyond the grasp of cold Octavius (or Octavia) or the iron Ventidius.<sup>53</sup> Compared to the transcendent quality of his and Cleopatra's love, the values of the world seem harsh, narrow, and sordid. What Cleopatra knew with a woman's natural instinct, Antony realizes through a series of externalized conflicts. The best description of their love is given by Cleopatra:

My love's a noble madness,  
Which shows the cause deserved it. Moderate sorrow  
Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man:  
But I have loved with such transcendent passion,  
I soared, at first, quite out of reason's view,  
And now am lost above it.

(II.i.361)

Antony's acceptance and celebration of their love is the "heroic" outcome of the play. "The problems of empire are raised but only to be re-absorbed in the problems of love."<sup>54</sup> Antony's heroism lies in his ability to subordinate empire to love. Like Samson and Oedipus he discovers the divine design and true source of his strength before it is too late. In his last speech to Ventidius he proclaims the final victory of love in identifying valour, honour, and heroism with it. He is an older, sober



Almanzor cataloguing his conquests as "easy merchandise" for Almahide's love. In a very different mood Almanzor had actually promised Almahide kingdoms of the world:

Born, as I am, still to command, not sue,  
Yet you shall see what I can beg for you;  
And if your father will require a crown  
Let him but name the Kingdom, 'tis his own.

(IV.ii.97)

Antony has made good this juvenile pledge, but now realizes the real worth of conquest:

What should I fight for now?--my queen is dead.  
I was but great for her; my power, my empire,  
Were but my merchandise to buy her love;  
And conquered kings, my factors. Now she's dead,  
Let Caesar take the world,--  
An empty circle, since the jewel's gone  
Which made it worth my strife: my being's nauseous;  
For all the bribes of life are gone away.

(V.i.427-428)

"In All for Love the Herculean hero's quest for unbounded power is replaced by a quest for unbounded love."<sup>55</sup> This is graphically presented in the last scene, Waith says, where the bodies of the lovers, regally attired, sit side by side on throne-like chairs as if they were giving laws to half mankind. The ascendancy of love in All for Love adheres it more closely to the Herculean plays than either Conquest of Granada or Aurengzebe. Waith explains this in terms of the totally unsuccessful attempts of "the world" to tame the hero's energies in All for Love. Almanzor remains "invincible" but in the service of Ferdinand and Isabella. Even Morat has relinquished some of his "irregular greatness" at Indamora's feet. Only



Antony's love "soars beyond reason and legality, leading the lovers to defiance of the world and self assertion in suicide."<sup>56</sup> This view summarizes the situation of the tragic hero vis à vis the heroic hero of Dryden's previous plays. It can be taken one step further to introduce Sebastian who combines stoicism with defiance. In choosing a hermitage instead of suicide he outdoes Antony in virtue though not in passion. The deepening sense of tragedy in Don Sebastian is redolent of fatalism:

Sebastian:

Brutus and Cato might discharge their souls,  
And give 'em Furlo's for another World:  
But we like Centry's, are oblig'd to stand  
In starless Nights, and wait the pointed hour.

(II.i.364)

If one takes Waith's viewpoint to its logical conclusion, Antony is the greatest of Dryden's Herculean heroes. This in view of the anti-heroic qualities of Antony discussed above, offers an interesting insight into the Herculean concept. It brings one to the realization that the Herculean is not simply a matter of superhuman strength and "overboylng courage." It combines wisdom and strength, the ultimate realization of all tragic heroes from Sophocles' Oedipus to Milton's Samson. The protagonist's achievement of wisdom puts him on the highest pinnacle of "herculean-ism." Price in his book suggests that the lovers' ascent in All for Love resembles the "canonization" of Donne's lovers.<sup>57</sup> In their disdain for the world and their helplessness lies their heroism, and this raises them



above their worldly counterparts.

Some critics suggest that in Antony is discernible Dryden's exhausted tragic vision. This exhaustion is also intensified by his immense inflation of the role of the eunuch.<sup>58</sup> This view justifies Kaufmann's use of the term "terminal tragedy" for All for Love. I see All for Love as the last and best experiment in the heroic genre. The tragic content in Don Sebastian springs from an entirely different source: fatalism. In All for Love the individual is still in control of the elements. Antony "speak[s] a hero, move[s] a God." He is not a victim of forces he hardly understands.<sup>59</sup> He not only understands but invites the forces to contend with him so that he, like Samson, can regain his lost strength. Finally, his gratitude for a life of loving which transcends all worldly empires is like Samson's all-seeing blindness:

**Antony:**

Ten years' love,  
And not a moment lost, but all improved  
To the utmost joys,—what ages have we lived?  
(V.i.432)

His victorious death is a far cry from the fatalistic resignation of Sebastian:

The world was once too narrow for my mind,  
But one poor little nook will serve me now;  
And hide me from the rest of human kind.  
(V.i.463)

When pity "the noblest and most god-like of moral virtues"<sup>60</sup> was introduced as the primary goal of the dramatist, the heroic hero lost ground. Moderation became



the keyword for eliciting pity, while excess was the hallmark of the heroic hero. From Antony various lesser playwrights drew their models but introduced love as a domestic not transcendent passion. The austerity of Roger Boyle and the largesse of Dryden were lost in the "good nature" and "sensibility" of the eighteenth century.



## CHAPTER III

### SHE-TRAGEDY

With the weakening of the heroic hero in the 1670's one discerns the rise of the female protagonist. Although this does not occur in a precise chronological scheme as this remark seems to suggest, it is nevertheless concurrent with the diminishing trend of the hero. That women came to be regarded as proper substitutes for the hero quite early in the period becomes apparent with the examination of plays featuring female protagonists. Male functions performed by women whether in disguise or in male attire (in which they often appeared on stage to recite the prologue or epilogue) enhanced their appeal for the audience. Comedies, particularly, thrived on presenting women disguised as men embroiled in amorous intrigues, usually in the commedia tradition. In tragedy this was left to the comic interludes because a male guise on a woman was always considered a component of comedy. Therefore the tragedies portrayed women performing masculine functions without donning a male disguise. Neither did they lose their femininity while performing these functions. It is an intriguing balance that they maintain between their private (feminine) and public (masculine) roles.



The female protagonist is as old as the fifth century B.C. The word "she-tragedy" was coined by Allardyce Nicoll to describe the genre of John Banks' plays, but it can also describe the plays of Euripides, as well as a few Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedies. If one regards heroism and femininity as opposite sides of a cyclical movement, the first cycle consists of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; Aeschylus and Sophocles representing the masculine and Euripides the feminine side of the cycle. Although Euripides was regarded as a notorious "woman lover" he was only a few degrees removed from his predecessors in their propensity to present strongly-drawn female characters in their plays. Aeschylus first introduced the whole gamut of female emotions in the person of Clytemenestra. Her longing for revenge on her husband dominates the first part of the Agamemnon. The two male characters, Agamemnon and Thyestes become considerably diminished before her prepossessing presence on the scene. The second part of the play is concerned with the execution of revenge. Agamemnon proves his gullibility by disregarding the prophetess Cassandra's warning and going quietly into his blood bath. Thyestes is gullible in falling in with the woman's plan of adultery and revenge. As early as Aeschylus we are examining motives by minimising the events and going deep into the complexities of a tortured, disturbed female mind.



Sophoclean she-tragedy has its culmination in the portrayal of two of the greatest tragic heroines, Electra and Antigone. These two women are given all the male heroic functions for they are the last survivors of a dying race of heroes. They are given no female weaknesses, longings or desires. Antigone rules out femininity to court revenge. Electra treats her sterility with an austere acceptance. Both Orestes and Haemon display a greater anguish than either one of the women. Fleshly weakness, as personified by Ismene and Chrosythemis, is looked down upon by both women. They are more like boy-heroes in their deliberate rejection of femininity.

To Ismene's pliant warning, "We must remember we are born women not meant to strive with men" comes Antigone's arrogant reply, rejecting the proffered security: "I will bury him and if I die for that I am content. I shall rest as a loved one with him whom I have loved, innocent in my guilt."<sup>1</sup>

In the same way Electra rejects all hopes of leading the life of a fulfilled woman in her single-minded pursuit of revenge. Her words indicate the barrenness of her soul and body. Her entire being is directed towards one idea, on the basis of which her whole existence revolves:

I have awaited him always  
Sadly, unweariedly  
till I'm past childbearing  
till I'm past marriage  
Always to my ruin.<sup>2</sup>



Her assumption of the male role and total control of the action becomes evident not only in the barrenness she carries about her like a male weapon, but also in the eagerness of a cockfighter with which she encourages her brother to carry out the murder plan. When, for a moment, he hesitates in his bloody enterprise on hearing his mother cry out:

Clytemenestra:  
My son, my son,  
pity your mother!

Electra quickly prevents a possible reconciliation:

Electra:  
You had none for him  
Nor for his father that begot him.

Clytemenestra:  
Oh! I am struck!

Electra:  
If you have strength--again!<sup>3</sup>

Finally, playing a childless boy-mother to the truants who murdered their parents--"Boys, back to the house."<sup>4</sup>

The overwhelming presence of the female protagonist in these plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles automatically diminishes the position of the hero. It appears to be an either-or type situation where the hero cannot survive unless given physical or mental superiority to all other characters. Agamemnon and Thyestes; Orestes, Polynices and to some extent even Creon occupy the same position in these plays which some twenty-two centuries later was relegated to the male figure in she-tragedy.



Even more complex is Euripides' exploration of the female psyche that works behind the revenge-motif. In Electra, one encounters several instances of his rare insight into the female mind. For example, her bitter rejection of femininity finds its expression in her resentment at the more seductive charms of her mother. Hers is the boyish ambivalence, admiring yet recoiling against the sexuality of the mother. This self-imposed austerity is essential for carrying the burden of weaker men like Orestes and Pylades. Her virginity after marriage is the ultimate sacrifice of herself that she can offer. It divests her of physical attributes if not physical desire. Awareness of the same physical attributes in Clytemenestra leads her to castigate her mother: "You, long before your daughter came near sacrifice, were setting your brown curls by the bronze mirror's light. Now any woman who works on her beauty when her man is gone from home indicts herself as being a whore."<sup>5</sup>

Euripides' experimentation with women characters in his plays was a considerable departure from the usual practice. Hence Aristophanes' censure in The Frogs:

His horrible passions of sisters and brothers,  
And sons-in-law tempted by villainous mothers,  
And temples defiled with a dastardly birth,  
And women divested of honour or worth.<sup>6</sup>

Euripides' greatest sin in the eyes of the judges of the poetic contest was his effort to justify the wayward passions of women in his dramatic interpretation



of Medea and Phaedra. Earlier, it was not even considered worthwhile to depict females as individuals in their own right: Aeschylus and Sophocles were notable exceptions in this regard. In his daring innovations, Euripides created a prototype of woman: the fiery, voluptuous, essentially sensuous female. She is usually obsessed with an overpowering passion inflicted by Aphrodite, Artemis or one of the several tempestuous goddesses. For instance, Phaedra's passion for her son-in-law is a result of Aphrodite's revenge on Hippolytus. However we may understand this divine interference, the fact remains that no other defence is offered for their actions except the complexity of the female mind which, poetically rendered, is its own justification.

Women with Amazonian statures are pitted against all types of diminished heroes. Whether it is Jason with his nervous logic or Hippolytus with his priggish austerity, they are equally over-cast by the women. Menelaus in The Trojan Women remains completely tongue-tied before Helen and Hecuba's bitter vituperations. Ion (in the play of the same name) is like Hippolytus in preferring his sheltered life at the temple to his father's kingdom and worldly cares. Although Euripides gives all his heroes the voice of reason he cannot give them dramatic appeal. That they are desirable to the women is their major dramatic function.

To say that Euripides is the father of she-tragedy,



which is after all a bastard genre, conceived of the illegitimate coupling of heroism with passion, is giving him no more than he deserves. For us it is a happy siring, for in his hands this genre acquired the literary confidence needed for its future propagation. Although no one thinks of his plays as she-tragedies because the materials are drawn from Homer where the emphasis is decidedly masculine, their feminine bias becomes obvious in contrast with their Homeric origin. Whether it is Medea, or Vittoria Corrombona two thousand years later, they equally dominate their respective dramatic scenes. The hero becomes involved in an action which is neither initiated nor even understood by him; like the broken, landless Orestes wafted around by the storm brewing between Andromache and Hermione. Similarly there is Hippolytus' unwilling involvement with Phaedra. Then the hero's bitterness at his women-engineered doom is appropriate:

Women! This coin which men find counterfeit!  
Why, why, Lord Zeus, did you put them in the world  
In the light of the sun? If you were so determined  
To breed the race of men; the source of it  
Should not have been women.<sup>7</sup>

The first Renaissance play with a feminine bias is the anonymous Arden of Faversham, entered in The Stationers Register on April 3, 1552, its authorship attributed to Shakespeare or Kyd. This play is the first extant example of domestic drama in Elizabethan tragedy. For a while it lay dormant as one of the minor Elizabethan tragedies.



Recent critical attention brought about a revival on stage where it was seen as a remarkably feminine play. Alice Arden, "the bourgeois Clytemenestra" as she has been called, carries the burden of the plot. To quote Ashley Thorndike:

The greatest merit of the play lies in the portrait of Alice Arden, absorbed in a despicable passion, but cunning and unabashed, incomparably the most evil woman up to this time depicted in the drama.<sup>8</sup>

She is regarded by some as the precursor of Lady Macbeth. In some ways she can be likened to the lascivious women of sensationalist Restoration playwrights like Edward Ravenscroft and Elkanah Settle.

Alice Arden is the first of many strumpets in Elizabethan drama. Her ability singlehandedly to move the entire scheme of murder and adultery testifies to her strength of purpose and the corresponding weaknesses of the male characters. Here one is reminded of the similar position of Clytemenestra vis à vis Agamemnon and Thyestes. After the murder of Master Arden, her cold vindictiveness reminds one of Electra's similar treatment of her mother's corpse. After Arden is stabbed severally by Mosbie and Shakebag, Alice steps forth to stamp her mark on him with the classic remark: "What! groans thou? nay, then give me the weapon! Take this for hindering Mosbie's love and mine [she stabs him]."<sup>9</sup>

A few lines later she reminds one of Antigone



clawing the earth to bury Polynices. The bestiality of the act fits in well with her sensualism:

Susan:

The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out.

Alice:

But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood;  
The more I strive, the more the blood appears.<sup>10</sup>

The twisted logic in her justification of her adultery with Mosbie is evident in her attributing her sin to the "chaste Diana" had a "Mosbie type" temptation fallen the goddess' way:

Alice:

Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me  
Would grow love-sick and from her watery bower  
Fling down Endymion and snatch him up:  
Then blame me not, that slay a silly man  
Not half so lovely as Endymion.<sup>11</sup>

There is an ironical half-truth in Arden's excuses to Mosbie to treat her choler as "women prating." This prating quality Alice shares with all domestic heroines. In the context of the play, however, this prating becomes charged with her sinister motives. The murder plan is carried out with a brazen fixity of purpose. Despite its obvious grossness, they are all taken in, Master Franklin with honest loyalty, Arden with pathological credulity, Shakebag and Will with professional coarseness, Michael and Susan with half-hearted acquiescence. The play ends like a moral fable with each man getting his due, but none more worthy of it than Mistress Alice.

Four men are featured opposite Alice Arden, the



husband, the lover and the two tools of revenge. The husband's credulity as shown here becomes proverbial for the lover-heroes of she-tragedy. Mosbie is the passive party who receives his mistress' favours without attempting to participate in her designs. Shakebag and Will act as tools of revenge, corresponding to the menial-tools of villain-tragedy.

Two other feminine plays which are appropriate here because of their thematic similarity are Beaumont and Fletcher's The Maid's Tragedy and Middleton and Rowley's The Changeling. Evadne (The Maid's Tragedy) and Beatrice-Joanna (The Changeling) betray their respective husbands before marriage in prolonged adulterous relationships with other men. Beatrice-Joanna's adultery with DeFlores is much more gross because of his inferior social standing. Evadne's brazen betrayal of Amintor is more willful, as she confesses to her husband on the wedding night. But whatever their respective attitudes to this guilt, the fact of their loss of virginity before marriage would have been opposed to the basic tenets of the Restoration dramatic ideal. This is a point to be taken up in detail later but here it may suffice to say that virginity was considered an essential prerequisite for the Restoration tragic heroine. Rules of conduct set up by Honore D'Urfe demanded a strict decorum which precluded voluptuous physical attributes of the kind that are found



in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Therefore she-tragedy written during this period is of an entirely different nature. The women portrayed by the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists have little in common with their Restoration counterparts. The following lines, spoken by Becky Marshall as Evadne, could dissolve the audiences in laughter at their impromptu half-truth: "A maidenhead, Amintor, At my years!"<sup>12</sup>

Evadne and Beatrice-Joanna exemplify a certain type of female character who dominates Elizabethan drama. All the women in Webster's plays have the same flesh and blood quality. Similarly, women in John Ford's plays have overpowering sexual drives. Again, there is Middleton's Women Beware Women where both Livia and Bianca are entirely motivated by sexual impulses. I would not go so far as to call these plays she-tragedies, though they certainly can be described as women-dominated villain tragedies. But a "loss of innocence" characterizes all these women except isolated examples like Aspatia in The Maid's Tragedy. It is this very "weakness" that Restoration dramatists try to make good in their plays. It is interesting to project their treatment of Websterian tragedy, in the light of their alteration of Euripides' Medea or Chapman's Bussy d'Ambois.

The semi-heroes in these plays were rapidly losing ground to their female counterparts. In The Maid's Tragedy



Amintor is at best a tragic cuckold. His reverence for the King makes him defer his revenge until Evadne is left with no alternative other than to perform the act herself. At this time her words would be more suitable in the mouth of the wronged husband:

Evadne:

Ay, you shall bleed. Lie still; and, if the devil, Your lust, will give you leave, repent. This steel Comes to redeem the honour that you stole, King, my fair name; which nothing but thy death Can answer to the world.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to notice, in contrast to this, Amintor's dull reaction to her news of the King's death:

Evadne:

In this consists thy happiness and mine:  
Joy to Amintor! For the King is dead.

Amintor:

. . . . . "Joy to Amintor!" Thou hast touched a life,  
The very name of which had power to chain  
Up all my rage and calm my wildest wrongs.<sup>14</sup>

This reaction is appropriate to his general attitude of resignation and remorse. It also establishes him as a typical example of an "inactive hero," who, as we will see later, deteriorates to a "non-hero" in the latter part of the Restoration.

A similar unheroic state can be demonstrated for Alsemoro in The Changeling. Like Amintor he is also a passive hero who is acted upon by the heroine and villain in turn. The preparation of alchemical potions to establish his fiancee's virginity does not speak for a heroic attitude of mind. According to popular convention



nothing short of an open challenge should have allayed a suspicion of adultery. When, at the end of the play, he is called upon for a showdown he still indulges in verbal parrying with his wife and allows DeFlores to take matters in his own hand by first wounding Beatrice-Joanna, then ending his own life. He describes himself most appropriately for what he is--a blind man helplessly watching the villain play havoc with his life:

Alsemoro:

. . . oh cunning devils!

How should blind men know you from fair-fac'd saints?<sup>15</sup>

The action and outcome of the play are thus motivated by the villain and heroine while the hero plays a secondary and inactive role. Much later, Hawthorne created similar scholar-heroes who confined their practice to the library and laboratory. His heroes, like those of Ford and Webster, do not conform in any way to the traditional heroic image. They are rendered incapable of performing on the battlefield by their scholarly and artistic inclinations.

The first fifteen years of the Restoration saw the rise, growth and decline of heroic drama. Heroism had had its day by the 1670's and, as I discussed in Chapter Two, the overblown heroic figures created by Dryden and contemporaries steadily diminished until we are left with the semi-heroes one encountered earlier in Jacobean tragedy. Since the protagonist's burden could not rest on the frail



heroes of post-heroic tragedy, it became necessary for playwrights to look into earlier drama for viable substitutes. A female protagonist was one likely alternative to the diminished hero. Here Greek tragedy furnished excellent precedents in the strongly outlined female figures in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

As late as 1702 Rowe looked back at the Greek playwrights for inspiration to produce some of the best she-tragedies of the genre. He had the same advice for his fellow dramatists if they wanted to produce "majestic tragedy" once again:

Those Ancient Heroines your concern should move,  
Their Grief and Anger much but most their Love:  
For in the Account of every Age we find  
The best and fairest of that sex were kind,  
To Pity always and to Love inclin'd.

(Prologue to The Ambitious Stepmother)

Another source of inspiration was Jacobean drama which leaned heavily on female figures, although there existed "moral weaknesses" which were not very conducive to Restoration tastes. However the playwrights realized the heroic potential of Jacobean heroines, once they were "tidied up" to suit the discriminating tastes of the Restoration audience.

Two external causes contributed to the popularity of the female protagonist. First, there was a perceptible increase of the female audience, as is obvious from innumerable dedications, compliments, and invocations to the fair sex, from whom the imploring author expects a show



of mercy: "a beam from their eyes would guide the lost mariner safe into harbour."<sup>16</sup> Secondly, actresses like Mary Betterton, Anne Bracegirdle, Elizabeth Barry and Nell Gwynn became the favorites of their audiences, men and women alike. Powerful patrons like the King, Rochester, and Sir Charles Sedley among many others added the indispensable touch of scandal to the actresses' growing appeal. Plays featuring them in prominent roles invariably caught the audience's eye. Pepys' interest in them, whether on or off stage, attests to their popularity:

. . . To a play at the Duke's, of my Lord Orrery's, called Mustapha which being not good, made Betterton's part and Ianthe's but ordinary too, so that we were not contented with it all. . . . All the pleasure of that play was, the King and my Lady Castlemayne were there, and pretty witty Nell, at the King's house, and the younger Marshall sat next us; which pleased me mightily.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, as better roles were written for women, men had to suffer the secondary roles. In the mid-seventies this became a well-established trend. One notices more she-tragedies produced within a short span of fifteen years, beginning around the mid-seventies, continuing well into the nineties. That they were not discarded in favour of sentimental tragedy is understandable in view of the inherent sentimentalism in female protagonist plays. This will be demonstrated in my analysis of the virtuous-heroine plays.

She-tragedy features two types of female protagonists, the virtuous and the wicked. These



categories do not permit subtle shades in characterization, such as "virtuous by comparison," of the kind that exists in Jacobean drama for instance. The actions of both virtuous and wicked women, moreover, spring from either personal or political motives. They must be virtuous or vicious to satisfy either themselves or fulfill a political responsibility which may or may not agree with their personal inclinations. This leads to a rather complicated division and sub-division of the she-tragedies written in the period. I think it is important to look at them this way because of the light it sheds on the corresponding weaknesses of the hero. Basically the heroine is either virtuous or wicked. She can be so for one of the two reasons, personal or political. All heroines fit into either one of the four categories thus created. Virtuous for personal convictions or political convictions and wicked for these very reasons. Meanwhile the hero keeps exhibiting different facets of his weakness when pitted against these women. What remains unassailable is the fact that he rarely shows evidence of mental, moral or physical strength.

On this basis of personal and political motivation, the entire body of she-tragedies written during the Restoration can be examined. First, there are virtuous heroines who are motivated either by personal or political responsibility, a distinction which cannot be made too



fine. In some cases the personal and political motives amount to one and the same thing. For instance, there may be a greater degree of political responsibility in the case of any of John Banks' historical heroines, but we cannot isolate the political image of Lady Jane Gray, in The Innocent Usurper, from her private image which is projected in the play. Whether politically or privately motivated, she would be equally virtue-bound. This is also true of the second type, the wicked heroine who is judged on a similar responsibility scale. In either case some heroines are motivated for both personal and political reasons (or responsibilities, as I prefer to describe it). The proportions may vary according to the personal inclinations or circumstances of each.

A typical "Image of Virtue" emerges from a study of the virtuous-heroine plays. Here women are seen most often as pieta figures.<sup>18</sup> Unmarried women are celebrated virgins, while the married ones are endowed with "unspotted virtue." Traces of sentimental drama become quite pronounced in their swooning, blushing, single-minded virtuousness. A woman who adheres to virtue against considerable odds is wonderful stuff for tears at a later stage. Physically, these women still conform to the Renaissance ideal of women, like Botticelli's or Leonardo da Vinci's Florentine figures. Mentally, however, they are far removed from the slightest contemplation of the



flesh.

These pieta figures are best seen among the English Queens of John Banks. The descriptive titles of his plays make their subject-matter abundantly clear. Such titles as Vertue Betrayed, The Innocent Usurper, The Tragedy of Love, indicate the potential pathos underlying these plays. Besides these historical inroads of Banks, there are more fanciful excursions into the Orient which is an ever-fascinating subject for his contemporary playwrights. Here the women protagonists exhibit a more luxuriant sense of virtue. One of the chief delights of their authors is to exalt the noble savage element in the exotic oriental women they depict. To this end they display their virtuous parts in a more uninhibited, less conventional manner. It was a moment of triumph for the leading actress to emerge from behind the arras arrayed as the Amazon Queen, Thalestris, or the African Roxana, or the Scythian Empress of John Dennis' creation. They could move about more freely on stage than their English counterparts and perform their act of virtue with as much abandon as an "act of sin." The audience thrilled to this exotic display of virtue which entertained without offering any violence to their better moral sense. There was the splendid spectacle of costume and set on which to feast the eyes. Richly decorated trains swept across the stage while the Scythian Queen writed in impotent rage at Orestes' dogged



indifference and Roxana tore her fan in anger. However they were arrayed, in nobility and virtue they were equal to their English counterparts. Both proved equally successful on stage because of their patriotic or exotic appeal to their audience.

The first category of virtuous heroines features the ones who are primarily motivated for personal reasons. They are usually more individualized than the women who are motivated for political and public reasons. In other words, the latter are more stereotyped because of their dedication to a political cause. For example, Banks' heroines are concerned with the problem of Succession, towards which their responsibilities and loyalties are primarily directed. On the other hand women who are virtuous for their own sakes are not deeply concerned about external matters, or only as much as they may have a direct bearing upon their own lives. Of such kind are the heroines of Mrs. Trotter Cockburn's Agnes De Castro, Mrs. Frances Boothby's Marcelia or The Treacherous Friend, Mrs. Centlivre's The Perjured Husband or Adventures in Venice, John Weston's Amazon Queen, Charles Gildon's Roman Bride's Revenge, and Ravenscroft's King Edgar and Alfreda. The entire action of these plays is dedicated to the heroines' total commitment to a virtuous life. No one can withstand their virtuous influence. Even the villains ultimately succumb to their total goodness. As for their consorts,



they are overwhelmed at the pious image these women project. An interesting picture of the diminished hero emerges as we look into some of these plays.

Except for Susannah Centlivre's The Perjured Husband (1700), the settings of these plays are always grandiose. Usually a King or a Prince is in love with a virtuous maiden much to the distress of his wife or mistress. The entire action of the play consists of the maiden's efforts to preserve her chastity and try to reconcile the erring King to his lovelorn mistress. The semi-hero lurks behind important scenes between the King and the heroine, up until the very end when he is killed off without much ado. This plot pattern is repeated in all the plays I have mentioned except Weston's The Amazon Queen, which constitutes a notable exception.

Charles Gildon's Roman Bride's Revenge is one of several plays on this pattern. The female protagonist, Portia, withstands the various forces of evil, always adhering to the virtuous path she has laid out for herself. Her inclination towards virtue, furthermore, is not due to a political or public reason. If her ultimate sacrifice causes political disruption it is only incidental to her personal commitment. Like her prototypes, Agnes in Mrs. Cockburn's Agnes De Castro and Placentia in Mrs. Centlivre's The Perjured Husband, Portia is faced with a formidable suitor in the person of the King. Her love for Martian



forms the undercurrent of her conflict throughout the play. Her physical desirability is attested to again and again by her devotees, but always in a manner suitable to the dignity and virtue of her person. Even the villain, Perrenius' lewd desire for her is tempered by his awe of her chastity. Hearing of her forthcoming marriage to Martian he first gives an open expression of his lust:

Oh! that I durst disturb the hated Rites,  
That rob me of my Peace and of my Love!  
Snatch the bright Maid from the pale quaking Priests,  
Rifle her Sweets even in the awful Temple.

(I.i.1)

Later in the same scene he revokes his words to give a glowing description of her virtue that makes his desire impotent:

Oh! no, she's Virtue all, and stubborn Chastity,  
Cold as the Icicles of severest Winter,  
Unsully'd, as the Rose within the Bud,  
Before the Morning Sun has Kiss'd it open.

(I.i.2)

This admiration-for-chastity even by prospective ravishers is a theme that runs through all of these plays, establishing the heroine's unquestionable right to the highest degree on the scale of virtue. Another instance of this admiration appears when the Empress witnesses one of her husband's several unsuccessful attempts to ravish Portia and accuses her of witchcraft with which she has ensnared the Emperor. The Emperor's valiant defence of her impenetrable virtue is in line with Perrenius' similar compliment. Like Perrenius he does not overly blame her



cold chastity. In fact here, as in other plays of this genre, the colder the heroines' demeanor to their admirers the greater is the admiration they are given. The Emperor's eloquence in a moment of passion proves the point:

Wrong not, by your fond Jealousy betrayed,  
 The immortal Virtue of this heavenly Maid;  
 In Contradiction by the Gods designed,  
 To our false Maxims against Womankind,  
 For in a Court in spight of Force, or Prayer,  
 She's Constant, Chast, a Woman, Young and Fair.  
 (II.ii.16)

Even when he discovers that he has been wilfully poisoned by her, he does not curse and rave in the usual way. If anything he marvels at her unwavering loyalty to her first pledged love, Martian. His dying words are in praise of her superb virtue and in hope to have her to himself in the other world, be it heaven or hell.

The rival force threatening Portia and Martian, being no less a person than the Emperor, can be offered no challenge by the lover-hero. Martian typifies the semi-heroic consort of the virtuous heroine. His futile attempts to rescue the heroine from the royal chambers, his total lack of initiative in matters of love and honour, and finally, Amintor-like, allowing Portia to settle the accounts with the King, place him on the lowest scale of heroes in the entire lot of she-tragedies. The Emperor is much more important than the lover-hero in moving the plot. Sympathetically presented by Gildon, he is not treated as the conventional aggressor. That Portia is violently



opposed to him is made abundantly clear in the play, an attitude he finds admirable as proof of her unassailable virtue.

Other heroines mentioned above do not actively hate their oppressors. Their emotions can best be described as ambivalent. Marcelia in The False Friend never hates the King although she is devoted to Lotharicus. Agnes conceals her admiration for the Prince until the very end. Only after the princess is killed does she succumb to his ardent protestations of love. In The Perjured Husband, the threat offered to both women, Placentia and Aurelia, comes from the object of their greatest affection, namely Count Bassino. The husband of one and the lover of the other, he is caught in the throes of choosing between a wife and a mistress. In either case he is deeply loved by both women.

Like that of others of her kind, Portia's devotion to her first pledged love is unaltered throughout the play. This is true of Placentia who would have none other but the erring husband, of Marcelia who remains devoted to Lotharicus, of Alfreda who prefers Athewold until the very end. Only Agnes does not show the slightest favour to the Prince in deference to the Princess. Here one may discern a familiar echo of the heroic hero who is specially appealing because he challenges kings on the one hand and prostrates himself before his mistress, on the other.



Similarly the female protagonist's courageous stand against kings and princes is counterbalanced by her faithful adherence to her first-pledged love. The same appeal-factor works in both cases.

Most of the romantic heroes in these plays show a major weakness, which is either forgiven or made good by the women. Martian first suspects Portia's faith and accuses her of having been ravished:

Nay, thy shame too! Gods, I shall grow wild  
With ghastly doubts, with strange, with shocking Fears!  
Art thou infected with thy sexe's Frailties?

(II.ii.16)

Then, when he sees her on the wedding dias, he raves and rants, accuses her of being a whore, and offers to run the Emperor through. It is not until much later that his suspicions are allayed. Similarly Bassino is guilty of making love to a Venetian lady, Aurelia, while his virtuous wife Placentia tries to win him back. Guilt is writ large on the Prince who loves Agnes despite having a beautiful and virtuous wife in the Princess. But in most cases the women regard this weakness in the heroes as an evidence of their volatile nature, and love them steadfastly despite their profligacy.

At the end of the plays, despite the felling of one corpse after another, the lasting image is one of the heroic female dying by poison (Portia), thrust of sword (Agnes, Placentia, Aurelia), or another means of violent death. A few surviving men comment with wonderment and sorrow on



these sad spectacles. Portia's epigrammatic farewell speech is fairly typical of these melodramatic endings:

Oh! hear the fatal Story of my love;  
And see if ever Woman loved like me;  
If ever Woman has been wronged like me;  
If ever Woman was revenged like me.

(V.v. 48)

After declaring herself revenged on her aggressors, she turns to her fretting lover and asks for forgiveness. This contrast of pride and humility is a rare theatrical device. The lover-hero has in the meanwhile repented of his rash suspicions of his mistress and watched her heroic feats with a mixture of wonder and petulance. Martian's halting reply to Portia's plea offers a direct contrast to her flowing diction:

Martian:  
How canst thou forgive me?

Portia:  
Yes, Indeed, I do.  
And love thee Martian with so strange an Ardour,  
That words cannot express it.

Martian:  
Let me crawl,  
Thus on the earth to meet thy gen'rous Pardon,  
But how shall I approach thee, O my love?

(V.v. 49)

After grovelling for a while he inflicts the fatal wound upon himself. When urged to live on by his loyal friends, he declares his unfitness for this world. Taken by themselves, these words appropriately sum up the position of the diminished hero in tragedy at this time:



Martian:

No, no I am the last, and worst of Men:  
A wretched Outcast, the meer Dross of Nature!  
Bankrupt of Virtue, what can Rome hope from me,  
But greater Ills than what I have done already?

(V.v.51)

Apart from these three characters--the hero, heroine and "tyrant"--another typical character is the "other" woman. Although a recognized rival, she is as virtuous as the heroine. Her love for the hero remains steadfast until the very close when she puts a speedy end to herself, usually in a valiant effort to save him from an untimely death. Placentia in The Perjured Husband, Constantia in Agnes De Castro, Thalestris in The Amazon Queen, the Queen in King Edgar and Alfreda, all play this secondary, rather pathetic role. In each case the women love the profligate heroes while the heroes are unable to love them in return. Notably different is The Roman Bride's Revenge in which the object of affection of the Queen (who is the "other" woman) is not the hero. Portia is the Empress' rival, but the Empress is not Portia's. Minor differences are sometimes come upon, but in essence all these plays seem inspired with the same idea, to present before the audience a model of virtue and chastity and to excite, simultaneously, the feelings of admiration and pity for the newly-set-up female protagonist.

The second category of the virtuous-heroine plays features the women motivated primarily for political reasons. Banks' female protagonist Anna Bullen, so like



her counterparts in The Innocent Usurper and The Death of Mary, Queen of Scotland, is a fine example of such a public figure. Along with all of Banks' plays which chiefly constitute this genre, there are random contributions of minor writers like Charles Hopkins' Bodicea, Queen of Britain and Mrs. Pix's Queen Catherine, or The Ruins of Love, which also fall within the same category. The heroine in these plays is invariably a political figure. The best exemplars of monarchical virtue are invariably picked up from English history. All these plays have a similar basic plot. The heroine is either a queen or an aspirant to this title who is beset with a grave threat to her rule. There is usually a powerful king or king-maker who constitutes the opposing force. A weak romantic plot is usually interwoven with the main plot, the hero of which exists in a very diminished form. His chief task is to further the interest of the threatened queen. At the end, the queen is sentenced to the scaffold by the existing ruler. After several tearful remonstrances with the judges to save the martyred queen, the lover-hero dies of a self-inflicted wound in the usual tradition of the diminished hero.

All the plays I have included in this category cannot fit into the generalized pattern established above. Although there is a general uniformity of characters, the action differs slightly from one play to another. Civil



strife seems imminent in Banksian plays, but Bodicea, Queen of Britain and Queen Catherine are actually set in violent times of civil and political unrest. There are no rival love claims in Mary, Queen of Scotland and The Innocent Usurper; in all other plays this may well form one of the basic themes. What places them in the same category is the obvious importance they give to the heroine and their partiality to the political theme. All heroines, without exception, are devoted to this cause for which they are often ready to make considerable personal sacrifice.

Of all John Banks' martyr queens, Anna Bullen is the least stereotyped. Unlike Mary, Queen of Scotland, and Jane Gray she is no threat to legitimate monarchy. She is a formidable pawn in the political game of ensuring legitimate succession. Banks adheres to all the historical facts, including the intrigue between Wolsey and Elizabeth Blunt. A greater playwright like Otway, for instance, might have worked wonders with Bullen, but Banks shows a limited imaginative as well as dramatic technique. For him, this was another historical plot to offer to the middle class audiences, who were greatly impressed with sentimental female drama. All ingredients for popularity were available within the historical framework so used to invite personification--a forced marriage of Innocence and Power combined with betrayal of Loyalty and Devotion, the efforts of Treachery and Deceit publically to degrade and malign



Innocence and the ultimate poetic victory of Innocence over its aggressors in a final death scene. Perfect stuff for sentimental tragedy. Its presence in all of Banks' plays virtually guaranteed their success. In fact, in the Prologue, the author confesses to the reason for writing it--"Having met with success in a poem of this nature . . . ."

The details of the story, as mentioned earlier, differ from one play to another. In Vertue Betrayed or Anna Bullen there is political as well as personal intrigue. Each one of the plotting parties is motivated by a relentless pursuit of power except King Henry who is shown as a creature of his appetites. Lady Elizabeth Blunt is keen to get the crown for her children, Wolsey wants power, Northumberland wants his son's progress in court. There is a deep-rooted reverence for the crown among the victors as well as victims. Most prominent among these is Anna Bullen herself who never tires of mentioning the honour it was to be lifted to the Royal bed. This eulogistic reference to the Rights of Kingship was of great value in a regime that had learnt L'e'tat, c'est moi from the continental example and from the philosopher, Thomas Hobbes. Pathos is introduced in the form of the child Elizabeth trying to win her father with "idle prattle," and bidding a tearful farewell to her dying mother. It is interesting to note the conspicuous absence of a single heroic device through-



out the play.

What is in fact heroic is Bullen's unchallenged role of the female protagonist which overshadows the King and Cardinal with an equal "blaze of virtue." All her troubles are easily attributable to the malice of the courtiers, as also the troubles of Mary, Queen of Scotland and Lady Jane Gray. The play begins on a note of deception as does Hopkins' Bodicea, Queen of Britain: Decius' deception of Paulinus, Camilla and Venutia, parallels Henry's deception of Anna, Piercy and Diana Talbot. When informed of Anna's marriage to the King, Piercy is incredulous:

Marry'd! My Anna Bullen false, and Marry'd.  
Persuade me that the sun has lost its Virtue,  
The Earth, the teeming Earth, forgot to bear,

. . . . . (II.i.26)

and later he says:

Is she not chaste! Chaste as the Virgin light,  
And constant as the Turtle to its Mate  
Her Person sacred still to all Mankind,  
And Beauties less corrupted, less defiled,  
Than is the lovely Blew that fragrant hangs  
On Autumn fruit, or Morning Dew on Roses.

(II.i.27)

The heroine's chastity and virtue need to be established at the beginning of each play. Here it is even more important because this later becomes the target for the vilest attacks on her person and family.

Anna Bullen emerges as a much more tragic figure than Portia in The Roman Bride's Revenge or even her own



counterparts in other Banksian plays because her suffering is both on the personal and political level. Having to contend with the King and Piercy at the same time, makes her function on the personal and political planes simultaneously. Because of this she strikes one as much less pathetic than tragic. Throughout the play she tutors herself to shun Piercy lest it prove fatal to her political responsibilities. Banks makes an important issue of this resolution in the frequency with which it is repeated. The Queen is cautioning herself against being overcome at Piercy's state and sight:

Cease, cease such sounds--  
And turn thy sad, resistless Eyes away;  
For if I once behold those Tears, and hear  
Thy just Complaints, I can no longer hold,  
But break I must through all the bonds of Virtue.  
(IV.i.55)

But Piercy, in the tradition of Norfolk (Mary, Queen of Scotland) and Guilford Dudley (The Innocent Usurper), is too much the sentimental hero to understand the rationale in her caution. As a result, evidence brought forward by the politician Wolsey leads Bullen and her brother Rochford to be sentenced to the Tower. This provides another occasion for Banks to play up the heroic qualities of his heroine. On the way to the scaffold she gives courage to her faltering brother, Rochford:

No matter. Let a Woman teach thee Courage:  
N'ere ask for what, since 'tis his Wise Decree  
Above who gave us with a liberal Hand,



And sate us on the highest Spoke of Greatness,  
No longer than he pleas'd to call us down.

(IV.i.58)

And turning to the band of accusers and plotters:

Well, Whose turn's next? Come dart your worst, my Lords,  
And meet a temper'd Breast, that knows to bear  
By my Bright Hopes, Y'are more afraid than I;

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • (IV.i.58)

Thus challenging her accusers to prove the truth  
of their accusations, and pledging her soul to the Saviour,  
she makes her final departure from the scene leaving the  
men looking rather sheepish and boorish:

Queen:

My Lord, I've but a little Neck;  
Therefore I hope he'l not repeat his Blow  
But do it, like an Artist, at one stroke.

(V.i.74)

This is the recurrent fate of the Queens in all of  
the Banksian drama. There are slight variations in others:  
for instance, in Bodicea the Queen takes poison rather than  
submit to the Roman regime. In Queen Catherine or The Ruins  
of Love, the Queen decides to live and wreak vengeance on  
the House of York for the death of Owen Tudor. Except in  
the case of Bodicea where there are multiple deaths at the  
end, not more than two or three people die at the ends of  
these plays. Again, with the same exception, they are all  
sentenced by the King for high treason. This is usually a  
gross abuse of the law, but the King's authority being  
undisputed it must be carried out to the letter. Diana  
Talbot laments Bullen's unjust trial by "base judges" who



are deemed unworthy of condemning such virtue:

. . . And her base Judges, had they not been Men,  
Would have bemoan'd her like departing Babes.

(V.i.64)

After the heroine's glorious martyrdom the hero is made to follow suit. He may be disposed of in one of the following ways: he is either sentenced by the King, or dies of grief, or commits suicide. In any case, his is a more whining and pathetic death than that of the heroine. Henry Piercy is shown a garment dipped in Bullen's blood, at the sight of which his wound bleeds afresh:

Now Sacred Drops now Heavenly Nectar, first  
I'll kiss, then pledge you with a Dying Thirst--  
What's this! I feel my Soul beat at my Wound,  
And bid me to remember, now's the time,  
Now to let out Life's Navigable Stream.

(V.i.76)

Thus ends the unheroic hero in every case. Only Cassibelan in Bodicea has some vestiges of heroism. His is the only death which makes a fair impact on the reader. In fact he serves as deus ex machina to bring Paulinus and Venutia together at the end. His ability to accept and love Camilla, after she has been ravished by Decius in the prison, immediately sets him above many heroes of his class. His solitary presence in this fast-dying race of heroes cannot breathe in new life, but certainly creates a spark of interest for the reader.

The second type of she-tragedies features the wicked woman. Here again the heroines can be judged on the responsibility scale. There is, on the one hand, the



woman who is motivated primarily for personal reasons and owes responsibility to herself rather than to any political or public cause. Whatever comes within the orbit of her personal ambition, she feels her right (and duty to herself) to destroy. The other category features the woman who goes to any lengths for what can broadly be regarded as her political responsibility. In either case the women are ruthless in the seeking of their ends. The most potent factor motivating them is some form of unlawful love, in the pursuit of which they usually reject the virtuous lover hero. This love or passion evokes their worst instincts and the action becomes charged with sinister schemes of revenge. Similarity of motivation, therefore, is an important fact to bear in mind while discussing the wicked female protagonist plays.

Of the several women who may be discussed as examples of personal motivation, the most strikingly evil is Catalina in Gould's The Rival Sisters; her rivalry with her sister Berinthea for Antonio's love leads her to commit one atrocity after another. Her attitude towards her victims is entirely cold-blooded, her only concern being her own insurmountable desire for Antonio. In the same way Callapia, in The Unnatural Mother, is consumed with desire for her son-in-law Munzuffer for whom she would willingly murder husband, son or anyone.<sup>19</sup> In Gould's own Phaeton or The Fatal Divorce, the Medea story is repeated, minus



the "unpalatable" qualities of Euripides' play such as Medea's murder of her children. The motivation and responsibility here are, quite obviously, entirely personal.

The Rival Sisters is a domestic version of another popular contemporary tragedy: The Siege of Memphis.

Sibling rivalry seems a popular theme which has in it all the elements of pathos and horror requisite to tragedy.

The rivalry of Catalina and Berinthea over Antonio is repeated in the rivalry of Zelmura and Amais over Moaron, the Syrian Prince. The contrast between the two sisters, the hero's love for the gentler one, the inclination of circumstances to favour the stronger sister--these are the basic elements of both plots. The only notable difference is the domestic setting of one play and the grandiose setting of the other. While Zelmura tries to cloak her personal desire for Moaron in the political guise of deposing her husband Melechadil because he is too infirm for the throne, Catalina has no political cover for her desire. She regards her unconquerable lust for Antonio as sufficient justification for planning mass destruction.

The entire action of the play revolves around four women--Catalina, Berinthea, Alphanta and Ansilva--who are motivated only by self-interest. Four women in a single play is a rather unusual practice in tragedy. It reflects the availability of actresses to fill these roles. Once again Pepys' comments provide a contemporary view:



[Saw] a good part of "The English Monsieur," which is a mighty pretty play, very witty and pleasant. And the women do very well; but, above all, little Nelly, that I am mightily pleased with the House, more than ever I expected, the women doing better than ever I expected, and very fine women.<sup>20</sup>

All four women are totally involved in romantic entanglements. Their single-minded pursuit of the prospective suitors is reminiscent of the mate-hunting in contemporary comedy. Catalina would have Antonio despite his own inclination for Berinthea. Berinthea would have Antonio despite parental prohibition. Alphanta would have Alonzo or Sebastian as seems most politic at the moment. Ansilva plays off her two lovers Gerardo and Diego against each other, finally preferring the one who is keenest for marriage. As a whole the play seems to suggest that in an otherwise healthy world of manly pursuits, women introduce pestilence. Vilander, the confirmed cynic of the play, is made the spokesman for this:

O woman woman! only given  
To plague mankind--Hell in the shape of Heaven.  
(III.i.37)

O who would leave such manly sports as these  
To wast his youth and strength in fond Embraces?  
To whine, and fawn, and Dy to gain a Smile  
Of some fantastick Creature made to serve him.  
(II.i.12)

Vilander's sentiment, echoed by others, is a continuing strain in the play, which underlines the havoc caused by the women. There is a wry humour about Gould's heroes which is non-existent in Banks' for instance. He borrows something of the comic gallants for his women-embittered



men. Therefore while they are decidedly unheroic they do not become overly sentimental either. This type of hero was thoroughly explored in Lee's Nemours in The Princess of Cleve. Of the three men involved with Catalina, Berinthea and Alphanta, one remains alive only to become a hopeless misogynist. This is Sebastian who has suffered the loss of two sisters and one mistress:

Sebastian:

O woman! woman! damned inconstant sex!  
 Designed to please us but resolv'd to vex.  
 The Plagues you heap on Man, the Strifes and Cares,  
 Are far more num'rous than his Sins, or Hairs,  
 Perjury's your Sport; your vows you from you blow,  
 As little wanton Boys their Bubbles do:  
 We please our selves, like them, with looking on,  
 But wink, the gawdy, brittle Thing is gone.

(III.i.43)

A sentiment as old and time-revered as Euripides!

In The Rival Sisters it is the personal vanity of a couple of women and not massive political disorders that leads to the ultimate tragedy of the play. In a characteristic scene of female vanity, the two sisters confront each other to squabble over Antonio. The elder, Catalina, cannot bear to be outdone by the younger, Berinthea. At this point a mirror is held up as the chief arbiter:

Catalina:

My charms, vain Wretch! here,  
 Be yourself the judge.  
 What is there in that face,  
 That is not with advantage writ in mine?  
 Does the Rose there wear a Diviner Blush?  
 Or can a Lilly show a softer Tincture?

(III.i.31)

Such flaunting deserves an equally crass reply:



Berinthea:

Nay in your sight I'll pant upon his Breast,  
 Die in his Arms, melt into charms away,  
 And think of nothing but of Love and Pleasure!  
 (III.i.32)

Similarly Callapia in The Unnatural Mother cannot allow her stepdaughter Bebbemeah to take precedence over her in Munzuffer's affections. Again Althea's murderous plan for Princess Libya in The Fatal Divorce is a result of Phaeton's transferred affection. All these women think of the vilest stratagems to get their men, without, for a moment, considering the men's own avowed aversion to them. Antonio's aversion for Catalina is paralleled by Munzuffer's for Callapia and, to a lesser extent, by Phaeton's for Althea. Nevertheless, they fall easy victims to the women's subtle ways. An interesting illustration of this point is the sub-plot in The Rival Sisters. Alphanta's casual shift of loyalties from Alonzo to Sebastian, at her brother's slightest suggestion, leads to the accidental death of Alonzo and the near-suicide of Sebastian. Not to be outdone Alphanta herself goes through a prolonged madness scene before dying a gruesome death by self-torture.

In the last scene of all these plays we can barely keep track of the number of deaths, most of them attributable to the self indulgence of the woman-protagonist. Antonio in The Rival Sisters is killed in a duel with his brother-in-law, Sebastian, on a point of honour. Tricked into a false marriage with Catalina, he discovers the



mistake and flies with Berinthea before the marriage is consummated. It was important to have the hero escape the wicked woman sexually in order to establish his "innocence" too. Sebastian, the hot-headed, misled brother, follows the fugitives to punish Antonio for the desertion of one and "whoring" of the other sister. Antonio's death is the death of the "innocent" hero. He is given a decent duel and a few dying speeches to provide him with a significant end. The women vie with one another for the more melodramatic end. Catalina is reported in the play to have died as a result of divine wrath, having been struck with a disease that rendered her incapable of speech and movement. Berinthea, witnessing such a sad spectacle, takes the very same draught of poison which had been prepared for her by her rival sister and from which she was once saved by the timely interference of a servant.

Looking back at the plight of the heroes in these plays one finds more stamina in them than in Banksian heroes. This fact can be partly accounted for by their cynicism, as I have suggested earlier, and also by their active participation in the action of the play. There would be no major calamity, for instance, if Piercy was removed from Vertue Betrayed but the removal of Antonio or Sebastian would paralyze The Rival Sisters. One must admit however, that the gullibility of the lover-hero seems his weakest and strongest point at the same time. We cannot



admire Antonio for marrying the wrong sister (although it is a superb comic device), but there is something to be said for the innocent mind which cannot suspect foul-play.

In general the heroes in these plays are given a pathetic death scene. Nothing was more demoralizing than Phaeton's whimpering end in The Fatal Divorce where he is disposed of in a stage direction. It is the deadliest blow to manhood when we learn that at the crucial moment the hero "[Faints away.]," and a few lines later "[They bear off Phaeton.]." Phaeton or The Fatal Divorce is the earliest record, so far as I have discovered, of such obvious "loss of manhood." It has far-reaching echoes, such as Nicholas Rowe's Altamont in The Fair Penitent who does the fainting act with equal felicity.

As against the wicked woman who is motivated for personal reasons there is the one who has political ambitions for which her entire villainy is perpetuated. This however, does not entirely preclude personal ambition on her part. Sometimes one feels that the political facade hides a strong personal desire. Therefore, if I discuss Joyner's The Roman Empress or the Irishman William Phillip's The Revengeful Queen or Sir Francis Fane's highly acclaimed The Sacrifice or even D'Urfey's elaborately oriental Siege of Memphis as examples of politically ambitious heroine plays, I must be conscious of the antithesis within my very contention. Every action of the heroines in these plays



can also be explained in terms of private self-interest.

With this conflict of motives in view, I would still consider these categories valid because of the comparative change in the focus of interest--from personal to political--and subsequent change in the entire body of the plays.

In Joyner's The Roman Empress the political motivation comes through very clearly. Aurelia's responsibility is primarily to her father's cause against the Emperor Valentius. To this end she willingly gives up Florus and even becomes his worst enemy. When her father misinforms her of Florus having slain her brother, her desire for vengeance is spontaneous:

Aurelia:

I do, and find myself  
In this short trance so chang'd, that now I'm sorry  
I have no penitential moisture left  
To expiate these tears, against my duty,  
Cast away on the love of Florus:

... . . . . hereafter

These fountains of my eyes be ever dry;  
My hands and tongue audacious to commit  
Mischiefs to terrifie mankind; my looks  
Dissembling, treacherous and fatal be  
To those they please; the powers of my soul  
Let my rage rule, and nothing it control.

(I.i.5-6)

Armed with this resolution Aurelia faces Florus with all the dissembling and treachery needed to unman him. These qualities are hardly ever considered worthy of a heroine. Generally the dramatist considers it his duty to justify her vilest action--Gildon, for example, was



totally averse to making his Althea/Medea behave in any way contrary to the dictates of "Humanity and Motherhood." But Joyner's characterization of both his women, Aurelia and Fulvia, is exceptionally uncompromising. The author's personal bias becomes evident in the course of his play when he makes the hero and his friends burst out in an angry tirade against women. Reminiscent of Vilander in The Rival Sisters, this attitude is here only made more crucial in becoming the sentiment of the hero vis à vis the heroine. When Aurelia and Fulvia arrive like carrion birds to mock the dying men, Florus and Honorius echo their insults with equal temerity:

Honorius:

Impure creatures be gone.  
The earth doth many monsters generate;  
So does the sea; yet nothing can produce  
So mischievous in nature, as a woman,  
Pursuing her revenge, and scorning honour.  
Mankind should have been propogated from  
Some other origine, and not from this,  
The fatal source, the occasion, and cause  
Of all his miseries, and servitude.

(IV.i.52)

Earlier in the play, the female point of view against male oppression is expressed with equal resentment. This is the sentiment of Antonia who has stood for virtue in trying to dissuade her mistress Fulvia from her unlawful passion for Florus. But her own husband's fickleness causes the same bitter resentment in her as in Vilander,

Honorius and Sebastian:



**Antonia:**

Nature and fortune cruel Stepmothers  
 Are to us women: in our tender years  
 Our fathers' Palaces to us are Prisons,  
 Where nor our persons, nor scarce our looks are free:  
 And afterward, when our maturity  
 Should change this bondage into liberty;  
 We only of all creatures are, who buy  
 With a vast dowry our own slavery:  
 Thus only changing a new Master, whom  
 We purchase to rule o'er our souls, and bodies,  
 And cast us off when he please.

(II.i.23)

These sentiments are worthy of suffragettes, feminists and liberationists. They carefully parallel the abuses showered on womankind by every male character in the play. This balance is maintained up until the end, when the author's bias becomes obvious. Statilius, the Emperor's faithful friend and counsellor, has the final word in the play when he frankly tells the Emperor of how it is generally said that he was gulled by the "misrule" of women.

**Statilius:**

. . . 'tis thought you were uxoriously  
 Subject to the ill-government of women,  
 Whose practices should ever be suspected.  
 Their vows, nor oaths; their frowns, nor pleasant looks;  
 Their smiles, nor tears should conclude nothing in us.  
 Man's heart is seldom known; a woman's never.

(V.i.59)

This is the only play where there is no romance, no languishing, no parting. The political plot completely overshadows the romantic plot. But the interest is still centered around the complexity of the female minds. Both the Empress Fulvia and her niece Aurelia are in love with Florus, the Roman General. Each is ignorant of the other's



passion and each plans with equal fervour, for her own respective reasons, to bring about Florus' downfall. Aurelia is furnished with the motivation by her father, Fulvia suffers from rejection by Florus. They feel perfectly justified in their act and the strength of their motivation. Fulvia even tries to legitimize her adulterous intention on the basis of Florus' resemblance to her husband as he was in his younger days! Not only do they justify their motives, they also harp upon the necessity of vice, especially in political contexts. This carries forth the wider political design in their actions. The following lines indicate their desire not to be outdone by each other in executing their revenge. Their personal interpretation of virtue and vice goes against the accepted norm:

**Fulvia:**

My passion shall esteem no sin unlicensed.  
In me let one crime still beget another;  
And let it not be thought a crime, which does  
Not multiply itself in many others;  
And ever with increase, the latter greatest.

**Aurelia:**

Madam mistake not; and let nothing pass  
With us for criminal, but what is virtuous.

**Fulvia:**

'Tis the delightful fruit of vice to think,  
That no vice, which is caused by interest.

**Aurelia:**

True of our selves, better than that of state;  
Which no great Prince values at any rate.

**Fulvia:**

They never else in Court or Camp would find,  
With all their pomp, tranquility of mind.

(III.i.35-36)



These words in the heroine's mouth are the contradiction of all traditional values of female protagonists of the Restoration. Joyner can be credited with some amount of boldness and originality, although the conventional ending of his play does not allow it to make a lasting impression. Finally, having achieved their purpose, they are transported with a harridan's glee and utter sentiments thoroughly unworthy of the heroines of the year 1671 and thereabouts:

Fulvia:

O my Revenge sweeter than life, or love.

Aurelia:

O how my joy increases with his torment.

(IV.i.48)

So as not to make Aurelia utterly villainous there are occasional glimpses given into the conflicting emotions she must endure. In an elaborate speech she expresses, to herself, the catalytic reaction of the parallel existence of love and hate:

Aurelia:

Love and Disdain two raging firebrands  
Are of the mind; their common residence  
Is in the heart; but raise a general  
Disturbance in the Soul, confounding all  
Her faculties . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

And she confesses to being torn apart by the two emotions, finally to be overcome by disdain:

As here disdain has love in me, by force  
Compelling me to act a damned part  
Against my nature, conscience and my heart.  
My honour doth depend upon his death;  
And yet perchance my life depends on his,



But I am now engaged past all retreat.

(IV.i.43)

Here as in The Rival Sisters there are several heroes who burst out occasionally in angry tirades against women. Florus redeems the image of the diminished hero somewhat in his militant bearing and lack of interest in women's affairs. Unlike Martian in The Roman Bride's Revenge Florus makes no futile superfluous gestures. He defends his honour against Fulvia's designs and remains loyal to his King, who is discovered later to be his father. His death, along with that of his friends and foster-father, at his emperor-father's orders recalls the deaths of Mustapha and Zanger. In his final moments there is no languishing, only a mute acceptance of Honorius' indictment of women. This partial re-instatement of the hero brings one to the conclusion that a slightly braver breed of heroes exists in wicked-heroine she-tragedies than among the virtuous. An obvious reason for this seems to be the excessive sentimentality the virtuous female generates.

In other wicked-heroine plays the same political motivation pattern is repeated. Queen Rosamunda loves Almachild in The Revengeful Queen, but her prime motive in getting him to kill her husband, King Alboino, is her desire to punish her father's murderer. Zelmura's deposition of her husband Melechadil in The Siege of Memphis takes place primarily because of his weakness as a monarch. This compels her to fight his battles and maintain law and



order. That she begins to love Moaron, the captive Prince of Syria, only adds to her predetermination. Again, Despina's desire to revenge the fall of the Ottoman Empire and Bajazeth's ghastly death in The Sacrifice leads her to plot against Tamerlane with Ragalzan. In each case the queens are made to serve a political end. This makes them less villainous than the personally motivated wicked women. It is usually consideration for a father, brother, children, or their subjects which makes them resort to villainous designs.

No study of she-tragedy can be complete without an allusion to the most powerful depiction of female characters in Nat Lee's The Rival Queens. Technically, The Rival Queens cannot be regarded as a she-tragedy because the women do not completely dominate the play. Although the entire interest in the play becomes focused on the two women Roxana and Statira, Alexander, Hephestion, Lysimachus, Cassander and Clytus are not to be taken for granted as are most of the men discussed earlier. The plot consists of manly issues, politics, war, ambition. Women are important because of the way they relate to the hero, who is decidedly the central character; so there is no reason to include this play in a discussion of she-tragedy but for the fact that never in the entire span of Restoration drama are women portrayed as powerfully as here. Dryden's famous confrontation of Cleopatra and Octavia in All for Love lacks



the fiery quality of Roxana and Statira's encounters in The Rival Queens. The same theme when presented by John Weston in The Amazon Queen or The Amours of Thalestris and Alexander the Great becomes markedly inferior. Pastoral romps of Amazons and their consorts must of necessity have a very limited appeal. It seems ridiculous to speak of these two plays in the same breath, although they are both concerned with the life and loves of Alexander. But a thematic study of the two provides concrete evidence of the range of literary ability of the period. It was an age of amateur "penmanship," when anyone with a flair for romance could turn out a play or two, so long as he had La Calprenede or de Scudery as his source-book. Such awkward essays as John Weston's Amazonian romance would run for a night or two, besides insuring for their authors the privileges of the pit.

On the list of players we have the names of Mrs. Boutell and Mrs. Marshall playing Statira and Roxana respectively. Mrs. Boutell was known for playing young innocent virgins to perfection, while Becky Marshall did sprightlier roles, having quite a following among the gallants. Perhaps these roles called for the histrionic talents of the Barry and Bracegirdle team. Whoever was cast in the later versions, it might have been considered an honour to portray these two magnificent female roles. Of all Restoration tragedies it has the greatest appeal to



women, then as now, because of the uninhibited display of emotion which is given a poetic rendering by Lee. Its theatricality may be attributed to Lee's acute feeling for the live theatre. Roxana's tempestuous lines are charged with a mad emotion:

Roxana:

And shall the daughter of Darius hold him?  
 That puny girl, that ape of my ambition.  
 That cried for milk when I was nursed in blood!  
 Shall she, made up of wat'ry element,  
 A cloud, shall she embrace my proper God  
 While I am cast like lightning at his hand?<sup>21</sup>

Statira's lines are tempered with due decorum. The polarity of the two women is evident in these lines:

Statira:

Roxana then enjoys my perjured love;  
 Roxana clasps my monarch in her arms;  
 Dotes on my conqueror, my dear lord, my king;  
 Devours his lips eats him with hungry kisses;  
 She grasps him all, she, the curst happy she.  
 By heaven I cannot bear it! This is too much!  
 I'll die or rid me of the burning torture.<sup>22</sup>

It is noticeable how the language is differently moulded for each of them. For instance, the word "she" is repeated in both passages with entirely different emphasis. This contrast of the mild and wild woman was apparently a popular device of the time. There are Irena and Despina in The Sacrifice, Amasis and Zelmura in The Siege of Memphis, Iphigenia and the Scythian Queen in Dennis' Iphigenia. In each case the wilfulness of the pagan has more dramatic appeal than the mannerliness of the other. The hero invariably favours the meeker one, while the audience may thrill to the pagan wildness. This was the



dramatic heritage of Restoration drama from Will Davenant's *Ianthe and Roxolana*. Never meant as she-tragedies in the sense of replacement of the hero, they are nevertheless important landmarks in the emergence of the female protagonist as a possible candidate for heroic honors.

She-tragedy grew out of the social and dramatic milieu, which in turn was greatly influenced by it. At the turn of the century one finds Nicholas Rowe writing some of the best female-protagonist plays. His was a solitary effort which did not prove very influential but he made the best summation and appeal to his audience for she-tragedy. In 1702 in his Prologue to The Ambitious Stepmother he appeals to the audience's tender emotions for his heroines:

If Dying Lovers yet receive a Tear,  
 If a sad story of a Maid's Despair,  
 Yet move Compassion in the pitying Fair,  
 This Day the Poet does his Art employ,  
 The soft Accesses of your Souls to try.<sup>23</sup>

Apprehensive of the male reaction to his soft, melting scenes he directs his appeal to the ladies whose soft-heartedness and niceness of taste can always be trusted:

Nor let the Men the weeping Fair accuse  
 Those kind Protectors of the Tragick Muse,  
 Whose Tears did moving Otway's labours' crown,  
 And made the poor Monimia's grief their own:  
 Their Grief Approv'd the Niceness of their Tast,  
 And they wept most, because they judg'd the best.

Rowe's most convincing case for tears seems to have had its effect. For even when she-tragedy was heard of no



more, the eighteenth century audiences still wept. Finally appealing to the female audiences to come to the aid of the female protagonists, for who else could bring the gallants around, he says:

Assert ye fair, ones who in judgement sit,  
Your Ancient Empire over Love and wit;  
Reform our sense and teach the Men to obey;  
They'll leave their Tumbling if you lead the way.

This was the reaction the she-tragedian hoped for whether the heroine was virtuous or wicked, personally or politically motivated. Rowe looks backward at the audiences of the last two decades in his vivid rendering of the dramatic scene for she-tragedy.

When all has been said for the women, one last look needs to be taken at the diminished male. In my analysis of the individual plays I have tried to bring out the various functions he performs in his reduced state. At the risk of sounding repetitive I can sum up these functions in a few lines. Florus has the greatest strength among his peers. He has the distinction of being the only hero in this entire genre who dies without indulging in any fondness for the heroine. Melechadil in The Siege of Memphis and Alboino in The Revengeful Queen are disposed of in mid-play. Tamerlane, Marlowe's earth-shaker, becomes a figurehead with Sir Francis Fane. He is entirely woman-dominated: on the one hand is his daughter Irena and on the other his mistress Despina. Moaron, Almachild and Axalla are "other" men who show more spirit but remain



subservient to the heroines. They are probably intended as dramatic foils to the weaker heroes. One may be more effective than the other (e.g., Moaron is braver than the others) but, in general, his presence is of no real dramatic import. Any one of them would serve equally well in lieu of the other. Their unilateral similarity makes them as inconsequential as their weaker counterparts. The weakest sign displayed by any hero to date is Phaeton's fainting act in The Fatal Divorce. Banks' Henry Piercy is just a step behind with his "sad resistless eyes" pleading for recognition. This, in essence, was the state of heroes during the forty year span between 1660 and 1700. The rant and bombast of Maximin and Almanzor were fast becoming an echo of the past. Women became worthy of tackling the most complicated roles with histrionic ease.



## CHAPTER IV

### VILLAIN TRAGEDY

Another likely substitute for the hero was the villain. Here again, Elizabethan drama provided a precedent in its prominent use of the villain-hero in the plays of Kyd, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Webster and Tourneur. Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great became a worthy model for villain tragedy in all its scenes of blood and gore. It is, therefore, quite in keeping with the traditions of the stage that villains began to appear in the protagonists' role, often displacing the hero altogether or relegating him to secondary functions which became partly instrumental in bringing him to the diminished status in which we find him at the turn of the century.

Heroic drama often portrayed rulers and dictators who were blood-thirsty tyrants on the one hand and ardent lovers on the other. This was in keeping with the Marlovian tradition of despotic monarchs. Emperor Maximin in Dryden's Tyrannic Love was a direct descendant of Marlowe's Tamburlaine. In creating a character as profane and irreligious as Maximin Dryden had two goals in view. First, he considered that "pleasure was not the only end of poesy."<sup>1</sup> The poet has the dual function of instructing



through "precepts and patterns of piety" as also through the very opposite. Maximin was not only a heathen but a persecutor of the church and therefore his end fully accorded with the rules of poetic justice. Second, his concern was to create a character with the full force of the expression "bid his muse run mad," in order to create its fullest impact upon the reader. Echoing Horace in his Prologue he says:

Poets, like Lovers, should be bold and dare,  
They spoil their business with an over-care;  
And he who servilely creeps after sense,  
Is safe but ne'er will reach an excellence.  
Hence 'tis, our poet, in his conjuring  
Allowed his fancy the full scope and swing.

Villain tragedy stems from plays featuring villain-emperors, like Tamburlaine and Maximin. Instead of adhering to Dryden's precept of "stumbl[ing] in full career," the villain-playwright keeps a tight reign on his muse so that his villain-hero is much reduced in stature, strength giving way to evil conniving. This is the root cause of the decline of the hero in general. To creep servilely after plain dull common sense (and sometimes not even the common sense is sought for) is never to reach any poetic height or excellence.<sup>2</sup>

Three types of villain tragedies exist in the Restoration period based on the motivation for villainy.<sup>3</sup> First, there is the villain-paramour who always functions in a courtly context. Here the chief motivating factor for villainy is lust, followed closely by ambition. In the



second category there is the Iago-type of self-motivated villain. True to his prototype in Elizabethan drama his malignity is not motiveless, although the motive exists in a diminished form compared to the villainy perpetrated in the play. The third type is the jealous husband turned villain whose motivation is the strongest, however ill-founded. His revenge, likewise, is of the most brutal and bloody type.

The change of focus from the hero to the villain may be examined on the basis of the three categories mentioned above. Sometimes two types of villainy may be featured in one play in the person of one villain. Some plays may feature more than one villain. These variations make the categories flexible and interchangeable. That the audiences' tastes inclined to violence, deaths and horrors, suspense and blatant sexuality is attested to by the continuous popularity of these plays. The problem of chronology should not seriously bother us since there was no time when villain-tragedy suffered a serious decline. Whether it were the villain-emperors of Dryden or Lee or the domestic villains they continued to thrill the audiences with their crude sensationalism and bizarre melodrama throughout the period. It is interesting, if somewhat futile, to count the number of deaths by murder, suicide, grief, often by mistake. In Otway's Alcibiades, for instance, there are so many deaths that Mary Lee, who



spoke the epilogue, confessed:

Now who says poets don't in blood delight?  
 . . . . .  
 Ours made such Havock, that the silly Rogue  
 Was forc't to make me rise for th' Epilogue.

Of the several villain-paramour plays that existed in Elizabethan drama, two were recast for the Restoration and proved wonderfully successful theatre pieces. Mrs. Behn's Abdelazer or The Moor's Revenge (1677) was taken from the anonymous Lust's Dominion or The Lascivious Queen, and Edward Ravenscroft's Titus Andronicus or The Rape of Lavinia (1687) was based on Shakespeare's play of the same name. These plays are distinct in having a "real" moor in the title role of the villain-paramour, instead of pseudo moors like Nigarello in Ravenscroft's Love and Revenge; and Osmyn in Congreve's The Mourning Bride. Other plays in the same genre, all written in the last three decades of the seventeenth century, were Elkanah Settle's Empress of Morocco (1673) and Love and Revenge (1675); Mrs. Manley's The Royal Mischief (1696); and Charles Hopkins' Neglected Virtue or The Unhappy Conqueror (1696).

The one important difference between the Behn and Ravenscroft adaptations and the other plays mentioned above is that while the adaptations feature a moor-paramour in the title role, the latter always centre around a female villain. The Queen or Princess, aided by her minion, perpetrates the entire villainy. Therefore one may argue that these female-villain plays are an extension of



she-tragedy. In fact the paramour-queen might be classed as the personally or politically motivated "vicious-heroine" of my earlier categorization. However, on a closer look, one notices slight differences between the two, which, I feel, are important enough to keep the two categories distinct. Firstly, the privately motivated heroine of she-tragedy does not "disturb the universe" in the sense the paramour-queen does. Callapia in The Unnatural Mother, and Catalina in Gould's The Rival Sisters, create a domestic crisis which is of no political significance. Secondly, compared with a politically motivated heroine who is also a queen, namely Zelmura in D'Urfey's The Siege of Memphis, the paramour-queen has no streak of virtue to justify her villainy, which is an essential feature of the political villain of she-tragedy. For these reasons, although these plays are distinctly feminine, I will discuss them within their proper context of villain tragedy.

Most of the playwrights who experimented with paramour-queen plays were clever plagiarists and manipulators of well known Elizabethan themes. It is not always easy to extract a single spark of genius from the stereotyped "well-made play" to which their courtly tastes inclined. The action of their plays invariably revolves around the lust and ambition of a queen for a lover and ultimately for the throne. The lover, if villainous, is the chief engine of mischief; if virtuous, is unwillingly



implicated in the evil design. While the greater part of the play is devoted to villainy, there is also a virtuous sub-plot that points the moral and creates pathos at the end. The villainous plots of the queen and her minions lead to the untimely deaths of one or two of the virtuous characters before the villains are brought to justice. On this basic theme of lust and revenge the playwrights made thematic variations. But not so in the characters, where there is a distinct similarity from one cast to another, be they moors or moguls. A study of these plays reveals the uniformity of literary taste of the playwrights as well as the audience which was responsible for this stereotyped characterization.

The most important figure, the queen herself, is always placed within an exotic setting. Laula is the Empress of Morocco, Fredigond in Settle's Love and Revenge is the Queen of Ancient Gaul. In Mrs. Manley's The Royal Mischief Homais is located in the "Castle of Phasia in Libardian" while Theramusa in Neglected Virtue is the Queen of Parthia. The villainies perpetrated by these women are so startling that they become the focus of their audiences' attention, altogether overshadowing the virtues of their gentler counterparts.

Homais, in Mrs. Manley's The Royal Mischief, may be regarded as typical of these "dark" heroines. The action of the play takes place in the "Castle of Phasia in



Libardian and the Prince of Colchis' camp before it," a fairly remote and romantic setting. At the very beginning Homais declares her unabated passion for her husband's nephew Levan Dadian, Prince of Colchis. Acmat, her eunuch, is the chief instrument to lure Levan away from his beautiful and virtuous wife, Bassima. Homais and Bassima are the stereotypes of vice and virtue respectively. The semi-virtuous hero, Levan, vacillates between the two, often tempted by Homais and always ready to believe the worst of his wife. We also learn of the true but hopeless love of the chief Vizier Osman for Bassima and her chaste denial. His wife, Selima, the sister of the Prince of Libardian, Homais' husband, is another prototype of virtue. Homais and her aides Acmat and Ishmael work together to plant suspicion in Levan's mind against Bassima, so that he falls an easy prey to the "royal mischief."

Homais' seduction of Levan is presented in an elaborately conceived scene. To offset this Bassima in a more simply structured scene is made to refuse Osman's proffered affection. With a penchant for coincidences, Selima is made to overhear enough of their conversation to allow a total misinterpretation. In a fit of grief she vows revenge. While the "innocents" are condemned, the villains revel in their adulterous bliss. At the end, the Prince of Libardian appears like a deus ex machina to punish Homais and her party. But not before Bassima has been



given the fatal draught, and Osman stuffed into a cannon and blown to pieces. At the very end we are told that Selima in another fit of grief and madness is wandering afield collecting her husband's "smoaking relics." Levan, blaming himself for the mischief, falls on his sword while the old Prince of Libardian is left to moralize on the events.

It is commonly said of Restoration plays that when you have seen one, you have seen all. A few events shuffled here and there would make this the plot of Elkanah Settle or Charles Hopkins. The most striking similarity in all villain plays is in their rendering of the female villain: each one is built on the same pattern. For instance, their prime motivation is sexual. Homais' desire for Levan is made the chief issue of the "royal mischief." To Acmat's apprehension at her obsessive passion, her answer is scornful:

Homais:

How dares my Slave speak these uneasy truths,  
 Thy barren Soul ne'er knew the growth of love,  
 And wert not call'd to threaten but advise;  
 . . . . .  
 No more expostulate a growing flame  
 More than Ambition bold, than anger fierce,  
 Nor can but with possession be abas'd.  
 My Life, my Soul, my All, is fixt upon Enjoyment,  
 Resistance but augments desire:

(I.i.4)

As for the lover-hero, Levan is the first of a quick succession of weakling men cast opposite evil women like Homais. He combines the credulousness of the lover-hero of



she-tragedy with a moral weakness that seems to be Mrs. Manley's contribution to the species. Real virtue exists in Osman and the Prince of Libardian but neither of them is intended as a hero.

In The Unhappy Conqueror Queen Theramusa expresses the same sentiment for a black epicureanism: "My Life, my Soul, my All is fixt upon Enjoyment" seems the motto of all the female villains.

**Theramusa:**

Choose they who will the smoother ways to tread,  
Where the dull beaten Paths of Virtue lead;  
My Soul's above my Sex, the common Road  
Befits not me, I'll travail like a God:  
Where I find none, these Hands shall make my way,  
And Pleasure only shall oblige my stay.  
In flowing Extasies consume the Night,  
My Life shall be the measure of Delight.

(II.ii.17)

In the case of both Queens, their lovers are remote and inaccessible at the beginning. Levan has a dual responsibility to his new bride and to his uncle, the Prince of Libardian. Theramusa's object of affection, Artaban (a faint echo of the heroic hero of bygone days), is in love with her stepdaughter Alinda. Hence, the resolve of both women to stop at nothing in order to "quench their fires." Such conflict does not exist in the case of Settle's Moroccan and French Queens, Laula and Fredigond, who love their own minions. In their case, ambition for themselves and their lovers overrides lust. The chief engines for this ambition are the lovers themselves rather than eunuchs or slaves. However, whatever the instruments used the



pattern of revenge remains the same, the queens manipulating the killing of their old husbands to clear their passage to the throne. The only exception to this is the case of the Prince of Libardian, who is saved by a curious strategy, to come to the rescue of the virtuous characters. But Homais employs every possible means for his murder. To Ishmael, her former lover, she promises "to bless . . . [his] longing Arms with their first Joys."

Homais:

I swear, my Love, by this repeated kiss.  
But lose no time, an Old Man has  
Not Blood to Spare, besides would make a noise,  
His Breath but stopt, will do the Work and pass  
As a Lethargick fit,

(IV.i.40)

Both Homais and Theramusa promise "first joys" to their villains for murdering their respective husbands, and bringing them to the beds of their new lovers. Yet neither does as well in her murderous attempts as Settle's Queens who not only murder their husbands but are equally prepared to murder their children if necessary. Laula, in The Empress of Morocco, plans a Masque of Orpheus designed solely for the murder of her son and daughter-in-law. This is done to remove the only obstacle for Crimalhaz's (the minion-lover) ascent to the throne. Afterwards when all her villainy recoils upon her, she makes a brazen confession of her guilt:

Q.M.:

Let single murders, common hands suffice:  
I scorn to kill less than whole families.  
In all my Race, I nothing find that's ill;



But that I've barren been; and wanted still  
More Monarchs to dethrone, more Sons to Kill.<sup>4</sup>

These lines are typical of the death speeches of unrepentant villains, with which they defy the Universal Law and shout blasphemies before dying a self-inflicted death. They also provide a remarkable instance of the lurid effects Settle often strives for in his melodramatic scenes; a quality that earned him the title of "the thick-skul poetaster."

The role of the villain-minion is a very interesting study of mechanical villainy. None of these men is a thinking-villain. In general they remain subservient to the will of their mistresses until the end, when there is a sudden reversal for which the audience is unprepared. In this they display an insatiable lust for a younger woman, usually the virtuous daughter of their former mistress. This freshly begotten desire results in a scene of betrayal in which the Queen is killed by her own creature. Crimalhaz in The Empress of Morocco forces himself on the virtuous Miriamne after he is securely installed on the throne, and orders the Queen to be apprehended for "[Her] poyson'd Husband, and [her] murder'd Son": Memnon kills Theramusa when he finds her preferring Artaban to him. Only in Settle's Love and Revenge do the villain-lovers remain faithful to each other until the very end.

Another instance of thematic similarity is in the denouement of the plays. In most cases one of the villain's



party has a change of heart, usually due to the virtuous influence of a captive princess. Hametalhaz in The Empress of Morocco, who has engineered the mischief along with the Empress and Crimalhaz, suddenly finds himself overcome by the stoic virtue of Mariamne, Crimalhaz's fair captive. Later, he recounts his change of heart to Muly Hamet and Miriamne herself. Muly Hamet marvels at Miriamne's miraculous escape:

Muly Hamet:

What mystick blessing does my fate pursue,  
To see her sav'd and see her sav'd by you?

Hamethalhaz:

Oh do not at this mystery admire:  
Nothing is strange which Beauty does inspire.  
To punish Treason and preserve a Throne  
Are due to Mariamne's eyes alone.<sup>5</sup>

Only in The Royal Mischief does the rescue come from the virtuous party instead of a villain's change of heart. The Prince of Libardian surprises Homais in her vicious designs by a sudden assault. But he proves his gullibility by becoming overwhelmed by her false protestations and dismissing his train of mutes "with [their] bowstrings and bowls of poison." Homais promptly overtakes him by instigating a civil war against Libardian. At the end the playwright arranges for Libardian to reappear, this time with a more decisive attitude. In a terribly contrived scene Homais is killed in the very "act of seduction." Such shoddy melodrama is characteristic of paramour-queen plays.

"The jingling sound of like endings" can be well



applied to the dying speeches of the queens and their minions. Except for Theramusa in Neglected Virtue who makes a repentance speech at the end, each one of the queens declares her colossal ambition and insatiable desire for revenge. This type of rant borders on madness:

Homais:

Thou Dotard, impotent in all but Mischief,  
 How could'st thou hope, at such an Age, to keep  
 A Handsome wife? Thy own, thy Devil will  
 Tell thee 'tis impossible . . .  
 Thus I dash thee with my gore,  
 And may it scatter unthought Plagues around thee,  
 Curses more numerous than the Ocean's sand,  
 Much more inveterate than Woman's malice.

(V.i.45)

Similarly, Laula's end in The Empress of Morocco shows Settle at his worst gimmickry. First she murders Morena before the entire assembly, then rushes to stab Crimalhaz. When foiled by the guards, she plunges the dagger in her own breast and upbraids herself for her feminine softness (an unlikely accusation):

Q.M.:

Yes, Sir, and I'd have done the same for you.  
 But since my dagger has so feebly done  
 Missing thy breast I've sent it to my own.  
 If some kind Devil had but took my part,  
 I'ad pierc'd thy bosom, as I've done thy heart.  
 Curse on weak Nature which my rage unmann'd.  
 A masculine heart link't with a female hand.  
 My stars had been more just had they design'd  
 Me less of Hell, or less of Woman kind.<sup>6</sup>

This last sentiment recurs in Settle's other revenge tragedy, Love and Revenge, with Nigarello as the villain "hero." Set with the traditional motif of family vengeance, Nigarello, who is none other than Chlotilda in the disguise



of a moor, has a family feud to settle with the Queen Fredigond and her son, the King Chlotair. After the revenge is completed and she is about to stab the King, she becomes overwhelmed with sorrow and stabs herself instead. These last-minute reversals are used to heighten the dramatic effect and evoke the "softer passion of pity" for the dying villain.

After all is said about the villains one must look at the long-forgotten heroes and heroines of the 1660's. Their existence is essential, in order to provide a counterpoint for the villains, but they are hardly recognizable in their secondary roles. Although all of them are presented as princes of royal blood, their enervation compared to the villains' dynamism renders them quite bloodless. The fact that they are ogled at by the female and male villain respectively is the only faint spark of interest they create. In general they are mistreated, ignored, and thrust into their shady groves and streams. One such instance is provided by Bassima and Osman in The Royal Mischief. Bassima postulates the problem of love and honour in a very mild manner in her encounter with her aspiring lover, Osman. Osman (inappropriately named so, because this is usually a stock name for villainous characters) is the very soul of honour in his protestations to Bassima, but creates no stir in the play other than the last holocaust of cannon fire. This leaves us the Prince



of Libardian who like a tragic Sir Jasper Fidget rushes in brandishing a sword to murder his libertine wife: a singularly unconvincing finale. Artaban, whose name is taken right out of French romances, has faint glimmerings of the heroic hero of the 1660's. His adherence to the love-honour code despite innumerable obstacles placed by the King, Queen, Memnon and his rival-lover, Tygranes, is proof of his nobility if not strength. Similarly, Alinda's adherence to the lover's code gives her a slight advantage over others of her type:

Alinda:

I must make haste, I dare no longer stay;  
Love calls and the great summons I obey.

(V.ii.43)

In some plays there are even two pairs of lovers, reminiscent of Honore d'Urfe's shepherd couples, but their contribution is easily summed up. In The Empress of Morocco for instance, the two men Muly Labas and Muly Hamet are cast opposite Morena and Mariamne: each one vying with the other for a greater share of honour. Muly Hamet is powerfully drawn, with some resemblance to the heroic men of Dryden's plays. But in the end it is the villains that have the greater impact than the "heroes." Much more than the two princes or princesses it is Laula, like her counterpart Nourmahal in Dryden's Aurengzebe, who remains the all-powerful character; a true descendent of Shakespeare's Tamora in Titus Andronicus and Tourneur's Duchess in The Revenger's Tragedy.



So far I have only described the villain tragedies with female protagonists. Where the villain paramour is a man, the order is entirely reversed. I am now referring to Mrs. Behn's reworking of the old play Lust's Dominion which appeared in 1657: its authorship is doubtfully ascribed to Marlowe. Later, it was considered to be identical with The Spanish Moor's Tragedy, a combined effort of Dekker, Haughton and Day. Undoubtedly this play was a rare dramatic piece for the Restoration audience, else a playwright of Mrs. Behn's shrewdness would not have ventured on it. As it happened, it proved a very popular play which was revived in 1695 and even found a successor in Edward Young's The Revenge (1721).<sup>7</sup> The plot ingredients of Abdelazer correspond entirely with the original; Abdelazer is first introduced as the queen's minion and lover. Later, it becomes apparent that she is the one who is a mere instrument in his hands. She begins a series of villainies at his instigation by first sending off her dying husband to a speedy end. The next person to be reckoned with is her son Ferdinand, the successor to his father's throne. Several complications are introduced at this point. Ferdinand is in love with Florella, Abdelazer's chaste though much wronged wife. Phillip, the younger son, is hot-blooded, suspicious of his mother and the moor, and eagerly hopes to thwart their plans. The Cardinal Mendoza, enamoured of the Queen and allied with Phillip, vacillates



from side to side. Abdelazer along with his consort is instrumental in the deaths of several virtuous persons, like King Phillip, his son Ferdinand, and the chaste Florella. Finally, in an encounter with the rightful King, he is brought to justice. Phillip is crowned King of Spain, Mendoza is pardoned and the Queen is killed by a treacherous plan of the moor.

When Mrs. Behn took this sketchily written play in hand, she made several structural alterations. She tightened up the plot to exclude many superfluous characters. An important change was the shifting of focus from the Queen, as central character, to the Moor. This is obvious in the change of the play's title from Lust's Dominion or The Lascivious Queen to Abdelazer or The Moor's Revenge. She also provided a powerful motivation to the moor in his resentment against his Christian captors and desire for revenge. In the paramour-queen plays the motivation was never as adequate. On two occasions Abdelazer articulates his wrongs. First to Alonzo:

Abdelazer:



Then to the Queen he reveals a similar motivation, but turns it to his further advantage by claiming it as his desire to match her royal status by regaining the lost glory of his parental regime. He then declares the creed of all villains:

*Abdelazer:*

Love and ambition are the same to me,  
In either I'll no Rivals brook.

(II.i.29)

An important aspect of providing this dual motivation of love and ambition is to vary the emphasis that each character places upon it. For Abdelazer ambition is the chief motivation, born of the initial desire to right the wrongs done to his forefathers. In the first scene we encounter the hero "sullenly leaning his head" while the superb lyric "Love in Fantastic Triumph Sat" reflects the atmosphere redolent of courtly love. While the Queen sues for his favours, he turns away with disgust at the state to which he has been reduced by her. Images of lust, voluptuous appetite and disease are prominent in the opening lines:

*Abdelazer:*

Thy face and eyes!--Bawd fetch me here a glass,  
And thou shalt see the balls of both those eyes  
Burning with fire of Lust--  
That Bloud that dances in thy cheeks so hot,  
That have not I to cool it  
Made an extraction e'en of my Soul,  
Decayed my Youth only to feed thy lust!  
And would'st thou still pursue me to my grave?

(I.i.10-11)

His very vocabulary reflects the rankness of her insatiable



lust which "purchas'd" his "vigorous blooming youth." For this she sends her "dotard" husband to a quick end, agrees to the cold-blooded murder of one son and the equally cold-blooded defamation of the other. Furthermore, she becomes the instrument of Cardinal Mendoza's undoing and plunges the knife into Florella's chaste bosom. She is the very prototype of the deadly female, who is more fully developed in Nourmahal and Lyndaraxa in Dryden's Aurengzebe and Conquest of Granada, respectively.

Abdelazer's private loathing for his minion status adds to his "heroic" stature. Mrs. Behn's interest in the exaltation of the noble savage is evident in her treatment of the hero in Oroonoko or The Royal Slave. Abdelazer, like Oroonoko, is a noble savage in his illustrious ancestry and desire for revenge. For this reason she endows her villain with all the trappings of a hero. If his diction is not always as elevated as that of the Drydenesque hero, he neither has the churlishness that one often finds in minion-villains of paramour-queen plays. There is a dark grandeur in his self determinism when he resolves to cast himself on mischief alone:

**Abdelazer:**

Now all that's brave and villain seize my Soul,  
Reform each Faculty that is not ill,  
And make it fit for Vengeance, noble Vengeance.

• • • • •  
And thou, almighty Love,  
Dance in a thousand forms about my Person,  
That this same Queen, this easy Spanish Dame,



May be bewitch'd and dote upon me still;  
 . . . . .  
 Mischief erect thy Throne,  
 And sit on high; here, here upon my Head.

(I.ii.14-15)

To place ambition before love (or lust in this case) is the creed of the hero. If there was any doubt about the shift of dramatic focus from the hero to villain, it is finally allayed in allowing him to trifle with the Queen's affections and purchase her very soul to avenge his dead father.<sup>9</sup> The villain has by this adopted a very significant trait of the hero. It is the rottenness of the Queen that gives greater heroism to the moor. That she cannot see his dissembling as anything but love, seems more due to "the balls of both [her] eyes burning with fire of lust" than to her naivete. In a companion speech to that of Abdelazer's quoted above, she too resolves on a villainous path, but for different reasons:

Queen:

Pleasures were made by Gods, and meant for us,  
 And not t'enjoy 'em, were ridiculous.

(II.i.31)

Placed opposite on the spectrum of virtue is the King's party; Ferdinand, Leonora, Phillip, Alonzo and Florella. Of these there are two aspirants for the hero's role: Ferdinand and Phillip, the two sons of Queen Isabella. Neither one of them, however, is as strongly drawn as the moor. Ferdinand dies in a true lover-like fashion after witnessing the murder of his beloved Florella. Phillip defeats the moor in an unequal combat, which is no



evidence of his greatness on the battlefield. The contrast between the noble savage and the civilized Christian is never more explicit than it is here. Abdelazer is a big wounded animal, shackled and bound, unable to defend himself:

**Abdelazer:**

As humble Huntsmen do the generous Lion;  
Now thou darst see me lash my Sides, and roar,  
And bite my snare in vain: who with one Look  
(Had I been free) hadst shrunk into the Earth,  
For shelter from my Rage.

(V.iii.96)

Another way in which he resembles the tyrant-heroes of Dryden is in his ardent love for a virtuous maiden. This, as I have suggested earlier, is a necessary balance for his warlike, fearful image. Here, instead of admiring Abdelazer's physical prowess, the chaste Leonora is made to despise his "base protestations" of love and prefer the pale, honourable Christian Alonzo to the moor. Abdelazer's desire for Leonora is no worship at a sacred altar: his primarily sexual desire reminds one of the phrase "kennelled moor" used for him earlier in the play. His allusions to his dark skin are made with frankly sexual references to his desirability among women. His own ambivalent attitude to the colour of his skin becomes apparent in the following lines where it is referred to as "ungrateful colour" as well as "polish'd Ebony":

**Abdelazer:**

Ay! there's your Cause of Hate! Curst be my Birth,  
And Curst be Nature that has dy'd my Skin



With this ungrateful Colour! cou'd not the Gods  
 Have given me equal beauty with Alonzo!  
 Yet as I am, I've been in vain ador'd,  
 And Beauties great as thine have languish'd for me.  
 The lights put out, thou in thy naked Arms  
 Will find me soft and smooth as polish'd Ebony:

(V.ii.87)

The seduction scene, complete with an attempted ravishment, is presented as a wholesome contrast to the sexless desire of the virtuous hero for his virtuous counterpart. Furthermore, there is no attempt to individualize either Leonora or her prototype, Florella. Both women are closely related to their numerous namesakes who are scattered with equal urbanity through tragedies and comedies, filling the unvarying slots for romantic virgins in their respective plays.

Mrs. Behn's villain-hero is therefore the peak of this sub-genre. She endows him with a lofty spirit and noble diction, so that the villainous part of him is obscured. Some of his lines echo those of Dryden's formidable heroes:

*Abdelazer:*

I rush'd amongst the thickest of their Crowds,  
 And with the awful Splendour of my eyes  
 Like the imperious Sun, dispersed the clouds.

(IV.i.57)

Even when he exclaims joyfully at the death of Isabella, we partly forgive him because it is poetic justice. Compared to the paramour-queens, there is greater heroic potential in the viability of his motivation: which brings one back to the rather obvious conclusion that love/lust/



desire has a secondary rank on the heroic scale. A noble vengeance evokes much greater sympathy from the spectator. Abdelazer's resemblance to Dryden's heroes does not redeem the diminished state of the lover-heroes. The fact that he is a villain (however noble) is never lost sight of in the play. Phillip, Ferdinand and Alonzo's presence creates three lover-heroes, who might have been given a heroic status. But Betterton's remarkable rendering of the "ferocious Afric"<sup>10</sup> indicates very clearly where the emphasis was placed by the playwright and the players.

The popularity of Mrs. Behn's adaptation was not reflected in the other Restoration adaptation of an Elizabethan play. Reworking Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus, Edward Ravenscroft found the same congenial material that he had dabbled with earlier in his highly sensational dramatic pieces. Tamora is a prototype of the Queen Isabella, only she has much greater motivation for revenge in the murder of her son. Aaron, the moor paramour, is the engine of mischief but lacks the heroic splendour of Abdelazer. Nothing else is remarkable about this play. It is easily classed amid the worst type of sensational drama which became a trademark of the hack writers of the Restoration.

The second category of villain-tragedy features the Iago-type self-motivated villain. As already stated at the beginning of this chapter, his villainy, like that



of his Elizabethan counterpart, cannot be described as motiveless malignity. The motive always exists, however slender and out of proportion with the perpetrated villainy. The playwrights paid lip-courtesy to Dryden's contention that it is necessary to balance villainy with adequate motive:

To produce a villain, without other reason than a natural inclination to villainy, is, in Poetry, to produce an effect without a cause; and to make him more a villain than he has just reason to be, is to make an effect which is stronger than the cause."<sup>11</sup>

Three plays stand out as examples of this type: Thomas Porter's popular chivalric tragedy, The Villain, written as early as 1663; Henry Nevil Payne's The Fatal Jealousie, written ten years later, and at the tail end of the period in 1697 Sir Edward Filmer's The Unnatural Brother. The spacing out of these plays over a forty year span suggests a continuous experimentation with this genre. The Villain became a theatrical triumph at the time of Will Davenant's heroic extravaganzas. The Unnatural Brother coincided with the uproar over drama of sensibility with the production of Thomas Southerne's Oronoko (1696) and Colley Cibber's Love's Last Shift (1698).

Elizabethan drama abounds in revenge tragedies which may have suggested themes and characters to the Restoration playwrights. Shakespeare's Iago is the prototype of a bare-faced villain. There are several other ill countenanced, malcontent, dour-faced villains in Jacobean



drama. Some like DeFlores in Middleton and Rowley's The Changeling may have been the model for Malignii in Porter's The Villain. Again, there are others with an old family grudge, which they vent in crafty devious ways to the destruction of entire families: Vendice in The Revenger's Tragedy and D'Amville in The Atheist's Tragedy are among the numerous examples of this type. Somewhat distinct is the type portrayed by Orgillus in Ford's The Broken Heart. Although we tend to overlook the basic fact of revenge in the elaborately conceived, part mythic, part operatic, conception of this play, the fact remains that it is Orgillus' revenge on Ithocles for depriving him of a mistress that sets the plot in motion. A similar motive exists in a more crude form in Filmer's The Unnatural Brother, where Grammont has deprived Dampierre of a mistress to court her for himself.

The type of villain represented by Malignii and Dampierre is distinguished by a melancholic humour. He adheres to "low" stratagems rather than prove his valour like the villain-paramour. We never encounter him killing an opponent in open battle like Abdelazer, neither is he nobly born to enact a "noble revenge." He is either a servant (with somewhat noble antecedents) or at most a lesser kinsman of his opponents, who are themselves never placed in grandiose settings. Malignii, in The Villain, is described as "The Major" but his function is no more



than that of an exalted servant in carrying out Brisac's domestic rather than military orders. His position in the play is reminiscent of Iago's, who has a similar position of domestic confidence with Othello. In trying to instigate one party against the other, Malignii falls within the "confidante-servant" category who engineers his way through subtle flattery and deceit. In Payne's The Fatal Jealousy the villain Jasper is actually a servant of Don Antonio's household. Therefore, his villainous devices are kitchen conspiracies with nurse-maids and chambermaids. That he was once richly born gives him no entry to better society: he remains a mean domestic until the very end. Dampierre in The Unnatural Brother is indeed nobly born, since he is the "hero's" brother; but his stratagems are in the same menial line of backstairs corruption.

In fact this kitchen-revenge becomes one of the characteristics of the self-motivated villains. The motivation for all this villainy is self-betterment for the most part. As a secondary motive they express the desire to abduct the heroine. Malignii is jealous of Brisac's friendship with Beaupres because it jeopardizes his own chance of advancement in the battalion. In order to secure his enemies he plays one off against the other. He first plants suspicion in Beaupres about his mistress Bellmont. By the same token he makes Brisac doubt the virtue of his sister, Bellmont, and aspires to Bellmont himself. The



plot is further complicated with two pairs of lovers, Brisac and Charlotte, Beaupres and Bellmont, making courtly overtures towards one another. The obstruction in either case is Clairmont, the General, who is the former aspirant for Bellmont and the present suitor for Charlotte. Boutefeu is the headstrong young cavalier in love with Bellmont, ready to be ignited at the slightest touch. Malignii has an easy task in setting off the parties against one another by referring the two scorned lovers to the two successful ones. Using the chambermaid Luyson as his menial tool, he employs the usual devices of forged letter, garden assaults and confidence tricks.

Such counterplay of jealous forces among a group of upright and honour bound persons is a sure indication of Porter's indebtedness to Shakespeare's Othello. Shakespearean influence is much more explicit in the "engineering scenes" as also in the reference to "Honest Malignii."

Neville Payne's Fatal Jealousy and Filmer's The Unnatural Brother operate on an identical jealousy theme. Actually either one of them might have been justifiably called The Fatal Jealousy. Don Antonio, in Payne's play, is a tragic version of the comic cuckold. The "unspotted virtue" of his wife Celia is constantly brought into question by Jasper's clever insinuations. Celia reminds one of her namesake in Ben Jonson's Volpone whose virtue



remains unspotted despite all of Mosca's (Jasper's?) ingenuity. Don Antonio suspects Celia of the guilt that is rightly attributable to her sister Eugenia. Eugenia herself is an "innocent victim" of bawds and libertines. The tragedy stems from Jasper's determination to regain for himself the lost glory of his forefathers. His menial tool is the old nurse, to gain whose favour he prostitutes himself in a few crude bedroom scenes, reminiscent of some of the bawdiest comedies of the period.

The other "Fatal Jealousy" play features Grammont's jealousy of his chaste wife Elvira, due to the mischief mongering of his brother Dampierre. The latter, as is obvious, has taken the place of Jasper in the previous play. His motivation like that of Jasper is self betterment, for which he is given a greater impetus in the support of his uncle Beaufort who nurtures a secret passion for Elvira. The suspicion is planted on Grammont's best friend Montigny, who is in turn contracted to his (Grammont's) sister Leonora. The villain's chores are carried out by the maid Lysette who works for a slight personal motive as well as Dampierre's approbation.

With the exception of Jasper, who does not make a personal assault on Celia, all other villains have at least one garden abduction scene with the heroines. The women are carried there under false pretences by their maids. While they struggle with their assailants, the one



earmarked "suspect" arrives to rescue them and thus confirms the suspicion by his presence on the scene. Husbands merely look on while the villain easily turns the whole incident to his advantage. This occurs in The Unnatural Brother when Lysette (the maid) leaves Elvira to grapple with Dampierre who would speak for himself before negotiating for his uncle, Beaufort. Just as the pleader turns aggressor on comes Montigny to the rescue only to become embroiled in the intrigue. Dampierre passes on the entire incident as an assignation between Elvira and Montigny.

The villain always offers a sexual bait to his female accomplice. In each case the maid surrenders her loyalty to her mistress, in the hope of monetary and sexual fulfillment. Only in The Fatal Jealousie is this consequence dwelt on at some length in the pseudo comic scenes between Jasper and the old nurse. Usually the services of an accomplice are taken for granted by the villain. With the same ease she is quietly disposed of at the end. The nurse dies by Jasper's hand "for babbling." So does Lysette by Dampierre's hand who employs the curious device of giving her a pair of poisoned gloves! In each case they are responsible for a part of the unravelment of the plot. The nurse in her madness and fright blurts out part of the truth to Don Antonio. Luyson arrives at the fatal meeting of Bellmont, Beaupres and Malignii and reveals some of the latter's villainy. Leonora encounters



Lysette dying of the poisoned gloves and elicits some information from her. Their menial status entitles them to a small part of the unravelment only, the greater part is revealed by other means.

In most plays the villain is given some moments of private self-glorification. This is usually dramatized in the form of a soliloquy because, unlike the villain paramour, he has no equal accomplice with whom he can share his philosophy of villainy. He is usually far cleverer than either his opponents or accomplices. So he soliloquizes in private about the nature and extent of his villainy. The only time he makes a public declaration is at the very end, when he is overtaken by law. In The Fatal Jealousie, for instance, Jasper echoes DeFlores in The Changeling in his determination to excel in villainy. After the Lady Eugenia arrogantly turns down his proffered "help" in her affairs, he determines to better himself in other ways:

Jasper:

So scornful! Villain! Nay, if you call me so 'tis time  
To be so; what a Devil ayls my face that she contemns  
Me thus? May be my Nose is not long enough she thinks,  
Pox on her Pride, 'tis that o'ercomes her Leachery--I must  
Alter my Trade, for I was ne'er born I see to thrive by  
Love; then I'le set up a shop of hatred, and the wares  
Vent shall be Revenge, that may hit;

(I.i.17)

In the same vein he says later:

And since things excellent commended be,  
T' shall be may Aym t' excell in villainy.

(I.i.21)



Dampierre in The Unnatural Brother is given fewer soliloquies. He is often made to leave the stage before the others, which takes away his chance to soliloquize. At the end he is quietly led to his punishment; therefore we do not have a deep insight into the nature of evil that he exemplifies. At one point, however, he is left alone on stage after having discussed with his dotard uncle the possibility of abducting Elvira:

Dampierre:

Go, go to bed old man, sleep if thou canst,  
And dream of happy hours thou ne'er shalt see  
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •  
Poor I am but his humble Instrument,  
Ha! Ha! Ha!  
I cou'd e'en kill myself with Laughing now,  
To see how strongly all things have conspir'd  
To crown my Roguery with Success,  
And me with Safety.

(IV.i.34)

These plays depend far more on conversation than on action. The plot device in each case is a series of "convincing-encounters" between the villain and his opponents. The villain's clever use of rhetorical devices, his readiness to kill himself in order to prove the sincerity of his intention (Malignii), his sudden repentance and conversion (Dampierre), his groans and tears at his master's abject state (Jasper) are physical manifestations of his clever manipulation of his opponent's emotions. These encounters are also used by the villain to worm his way into his master's confidence. Malignii is regarded by both Brisac and Beaupres as their most honest, loyal friend.



Jasper leads Don Antonio in a noose throughout the play, gulling him with witchcraft, spells, magic incantations and future prophecies. At the very end, after killing Antonio, he glibly relates his confidence-tricks:

Alas! he cannot tell; the jealous fool  
Was but an Instrument in my Revenge.

(v.i.71)

Similarly, Dampierre's credulous old uncle Beaufort and his brother Grammont equally hold him in their deepest confidence. Beaufort is an old fool tottering on the brink of repentance from which point Dampierre successfully returns him every time:

Dampierre:

These, Sir, are odd phantastick notions  
Of a working brain, fitter for schools  
Than for a Lover's care, whose Mistress is his all.

. . . . .  
And he who briskly plucks the blushing Rose,  
Laughs at those Thorns that would revenge the Rape.

(I.i.3)

As for the virtuous characters, they are noble and gullible in equal measure: from this fact derives the central problem of the thesis, namely the state of heroes in these plays. There are a couple of characters in each play who are exemplars of "Trouthe and honour, freedom and curteisye." Given no opportunity to prove their chivalry, they remain mere pawns in the villainous intrigues of their opponents. Both men, Grammont and Montigny, in The Unnatural Brother are the very soul of honour. In fact, Montigny goes a step further in giving the first place to friendship rather than honour in his scheme of values. It



is interesting to consider Montigny's speech on honour as an indication of the direction taken by the honour debate, which had been raging now for over three decades among the wits:

Montigny:

Honour! thou strange, fantastic airy thing,  
Thou losing bargain to the bravest souls,  
Thou cloke to bold ambition's restless hopes;  
No more to thy capricious humour will  
I blindly bow, nor court thee as a slave.  
The present time to friendship I will give,  
And what that spares, shall be intirely thine.

(I.i.9)

In The Villain Brisac and Beaupres are cast in the same mould as are Don Antonio and Don Gerardo in The Fatal Jealousie. Although renowned for bravery, these men are helpless before their domestic problems. Their helplessness does not arise from the loftiness of their souls which disdain to meddle with lesser things, as Othello's for instance. They have smaller souls which they try to elevate by striking chivalrous poses and postures to fill the "hero's position." But their actions excite us no more than do the stylized movements of Samurai warriors who make several overtures before actually wielding the stroke. We are rarely made to look beyond this well-made facade to discover the soul of an Antony or Aurengzebe struggling within. With this in view it is easy to understand why the villain and not the hero "bestrides" this undersized world. It also stands to reason that each one of the "heroes," with the exception of Montigny in The Unnatural



Brother, is killed off by the villain's direct or indirect blow.

The virtuous heroines are drawn with an identical pen. Not one of them has any individual distinguishing mark. They are equally virtuous, chaste, loyal--all with the exception of Eugenia in The Fatal Jealousie, who is allowed to have a weak will. Each one dies heartbroken for her mate except Leonora in The Unnatural Brother who is saved for the surviving Montigny. In no play is the villain allowed to kill the lady. She dies either by her own hand (Elvira) or by a fit of grief at her beloved's death (Charlotte). Indirectly, of course, the villain is responsible for all these deaths.

These men and women being firmly pledged to one another, usually by marriage, makes the villain's task grossly unethical; none of the ladies is "available" for courtship. Malignii's desire for Bellmont while she is Beaupres' wife, and Dampierre's desire for his brother's wife Elvira, is not merely lust but incestuous desire. The garden-ravishing scenes present the world in its rankest degradation. In atmosphere it is not unlike the scene of D'Amville's attempted rape of his son's wife Castabella in The Atheist's Tragedy. Just as the world of Tourneur is ridden with darkness and disease exemplified in the sickness of Rousard, profligacy of Sebastian, and nymphomania of Levidulcia, so also is the world view of



these villain plays. Virtue is stretched to the utmost degree to highlight the villainy. Inadequacy of motivation means paranoia rather than revenge, a quality which supports the diseased view of the world.

To sum up the villains' position: it is for a strictly private purpose they perpetrate villainy, always hiding behind a fawning, respectful demeanor toward their powerful rivals. At the end, however, they are not unlike the paramour queens or minions who gloat in the bloody outcome of their schemes, often deplored their inability to "fill Charon's boat with more victims."

Jasper:

. . . Name the man that ever  
Did in one Day contrive so many Murders,  
And make 'em all successful.

(V.i.72)

The only other type of villain tragedy in the period has also been largely borrowed from the Elizabethans, that of the jealous husband turned villain. The one popular play of this type was D'Urfey's version of Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois. Emmet L. Avery in The London Stage 1660-1700 lists three performances of D'Urfey's play, the one of 1690 featuring Mrs. Bracegirdle as Tamira and the unfortunate Mountfort as Bussy. The second jealous-husband play is Aston Cokain's The Tragedy of Ovid (copy in B.M. dated 1669), printed in 1692, of which no performance is recorded, which means it was probably intended as a closet drama. Of Ravenscroft's The Italian Husband only one performance



is recorded in 1697 with Verbruggen as Fredrico, and Mrs. Bowman as Alouisia. The relative popularity of D'Urfey's play must be due to the audience's familiarity with its theme from Chapman, rather than any intrinsic merit. Thematically, all three jealous-husband tragedies feature the same ingredients. The suspicious villain-hero proposes to punish his errant wife. Her valiant lover or admirer makes gallant attempts to avert her fate, but becomes the first target of the husband's revenge. At the end, after completing the revenge on his wife and her lover, the husband usually commits suicide. In these plays the women are always guilty of "dishonouring the marriage bed," the exception to this being Clorina in The Tragedy of Ovid who is the only innocent victim.

The husband's image in these plays is a far cry from the usual dotard type one finds in other villain tragedies. In the paramour-queen plays the husbands are aging monarchs on death beds, in self-motivated villain plays the husbands are entirely gullible and display a lack of intelligence. In the villain-husband plays, however, the two functions of husband and villain being combined in one person make the hero far stronger than his peers in other plays. He possesses the mental and physical potency of the villain and a far more adequate motivation for villainy. The combination of these two qualities makes him forceful and his revenge more sinister.



Ravenscroft's The Italian Husband is primarily a thriller in which Fredrico, Duke of Radiano, is a mysterious dark character, who lives secluded in the country with his beautiful Duchess Alouisia. The Duchess was a novice who ran away from a convent, a transgression that often preys on her mind. The ancestry of the Duchess is kept as a closely guarded secret until the end when she turns out to be the Grand Duke's illegitimate daughter. The plot is complicated by the arrival of Alfonso who turns out to be the Duchess' first pledged love. The Duchess, overcome by his protestations, allows him a rendezvous, which is discovered by her husband. The rest of the play consists of his revenge on the Duchess and her lover.

The play has a domestic setting, which is a common feature of most of these plays (with the exception of Bussy D'Ambois) since the conflict is primarily domestic. The sinister, vaguely necromantic Duke is contrasted with his flesh and blood wife, who is allowed a moral failing instead of being made an innocent victim of her husband's suspicion and revenge. The Duke is a perfect villain from beginning to end. All his moves are carefully planned. At times he uses the approach of A woman killed with kindness:

Duke:

Live, live Dutchess, I pronounce it.  
Let mercy be as great a wonder to thee,  
As thy Crimes are to me.

(I.i.16)

At other times he uses Machiavellian arguments to justify



his actions which are reminiscent of Malignii in The Villain. After murdering his spy Roderigo he informs the dying man of the wisdom of doing away with one's own instruments after using them to achieve one's purpose:

Duke:

Thy Death was necessary:  
You were Master of a secret;  
Which I wou'd not have Known myself.

(II.i.20)

At the end after murdering his wife he becomes morbidly enamoured of the dead woman. In a passage redolent of Websterian imagery of sickness, rankness, and decay, his ambivalence becomes apparent:

Duke:

Thus Flowers blasted, by chill Winds decay and fade;  
But are these perish'd quite--I'll taste their sweets  
Once more--[offers to kiss her, and starts back]  
Ha! She is not a sweet smelling Rose,  
But a vile Canker--mildew'd all o're,  
And rank as basest weeds--not sin itself  
More rank--

(III.i.34)

More than any other villain in this entire genre, the Duke displays an artist's delight in executing a perfect revenge. Therefore the murders of both Alfonso and Alouisia are performed in the manner of masques. First Alfonso is invited to a banquet ostensibly as a mark of reconciliation with the Duke. The banquet is replete with horrors like a chair with a secret spring that traps Alfonso, dishes full of daggers and death signs. Then the Duke calmly discloses his proposed revenge. The strength of his motivation lends him the power of counter-argument:



Alfonso:

You said the brave and generous did act  
Without deceit.

Duke:

With Friends, and where they are not injured:  
Shall he that was deceiv'd to his undoing  
Not use deceit to right himself?  
The Notion's dull and flegmatick.

(III.i.34)

Throughout this ritualistic blood feast the Duke harps upon the "justness" of his revenge. After acquainting Alfonso with the death plan for himself and the Duchess, he calls upon "the Assistants of his revenge" to put him to an exemplary and gruesome death. In deference to the classical tradition, he lets a "silk curtain" screen the actual slaying, but a minute later the audience is allowed to see the victim with the Duchess' portrait pinned to his heart and head. Earlier he (the Duke) had extolled the pleasure of "Noble Revenge":

Duke:

There is a great genius in mischief.  
Bruitish Revenge is but the exercise of the body,  
Noble Revenge the delight and pleasure of the Mind.

(III.i.33)

A similar revenge scene accrues for the Duchess who is required to approach the bridal bed in a scene of spectral horrors with lighted tapers and dead men among the bed clothes. After she too is killed by the Duke there remains the last word on the justness of his revenge. When approached by the Friar for taking God's prerogative into his own hands, the Duke shows an unrepentant mind which is a characteristic feature of all villain-husbands:



Friar:

But Revenge is Heaven's prerogative, not ours.

Duke:

So say Divines:

But we Husbands are of another mind.

(III.i.42)

The type of villain-tragedy exemplified by Ravenscroft did not elicit any enthusiasm from contemporary critics. Its crude sensationalism was strongly objected to by Jacob: "This poet seems to be under the same Mistake with some or other of our modern Writers, who are fond of barbrous and bloody stories, and think no Tragedy can be good without some Villain in it."<sup>12</sup> Langbaine's censure of Ravenscroft is more severe but it relates to his plagiarism rather than sensationalism.<sup>13</sup> The fact remains that then equally as now, it was regarded as the worst example of revenge-tragedy.

This typical pattern of villain-husband drama exists in other plays with slight variations, the basic characters remaining the same. Sir Aston Cokain's The Tragedy of Ovid, which gets its name from the author's whim rather than from any thematic relevancy, is justified for the ineptness of its title by Langbaine on a precedent set by Beaumont and Fletcher who call their play A King and No King for no apparent reason, although some would insist that there is ample reason for the title here. Judging from the villain-husband-chaste-wife theme, the play may have been called The Jealous Husband with much more justification.



It might have been a measure of austerity for Cokain to call it The Tragedy of Ovid, to offset the worst kind of melodrama which he introduces in the main plot of the play. Here not only is the heroine (who is innocent of the suspected adultery) seated on the torture chair with mysterious clasps, but in her hand is fastened the heart of her dead admirer. Around this main theme are centred a couple of extremely crude comic and intrigue subplots: included in these is the exile of Ovid in Tomos which seems the least relevant theme of all, unless the whole play was written to prove two lines of Ovid:

. . . . . I was exil'd  
From Rome, and here confined, to end my days  
Among a people rude and almost bar'brous.<sup>14</sup>

This last being extremely unlikely we must regard the Bassanes-Clorina theme as Cokain's serious intention. Even the Restoration audience with its taste for the bizarre could not stomach such nauseous fare, despite the marriage masque which must have been added to court royal favour.

That leaves us with D'Urfey's adaptation of Bussy d'Ambois, which he firmly believed was a great improvement on Chapman's original play.<sup>15</sup> Its alternate title The Husband's Revenge makes it ideally suited to our subject, namely jealous-husband-turned villain. In order to correct the gross disorders of the earlier play D'Urfey presented Tamira in a new light:

. . . and writ the Plot anew mending the character of Tamira, whom Mr. Chapman had drawn quite otherwise, he



making her lewd, onely for the sake of lewdness, which I have here altered, and in the first Act mentioned a former Contract between her and d'Ambois which gives some Excuse for her Love afterwards, and renders the Distress in the last Act to be much more lyable to Pity.<sup>16</sup>

By "mending" Tamira's character D'Urfey alters the whole complexion of "the husband's revenge." It becomes a case of counter-revenge, Tamira having the greater motivation for breaking the bonds of a forced marriage, and Montsurry becoming a hindrance to "the marriage of true minds." This confuses the ethics of the jealous husband type and becomes an exception to the general rule in these plays. Whereas Tamira is, in effect, guilty of adultery, as is Alouisia, she is in fact looked upon with pity and tolerance for having to succumb to a father's will in marrying Montsurry against her own inclination for Bussy. Bussy's protestations to her seem justified since he is in fact injured by Montsurry stealing away his prize. Left without a stand, Montsurry comes out as the least heroic of villain-husbands, having to rely mostly on Monsieur and Guise for strengthening his resolution of revenge. So the lover becomes the "hero" and champion of the distressed wife while the husband, having forfeited his right by taking her against her will, becomes an intruder and a weak villain. The ingenuity of the plot is all Chapman's: even D'Urfey's efforts to conventionalize it do not succeed in reducing it to tame melodrama. His efficiency in handling Elizabethan themes, e.g., the transformation



of Cymbeline into The Injured Princess or The Fatal Wager, to suit Restoration standards, made him regard himself as a Knight-Errant, rescuing "extraordinary Beauties" of Elizabethan plays from "the obsolete Phrases and intolerable fustian." It is a wonder then, that he did not "rescue" Tamira altogether, by making her virtuous and averse to Bussy's attentions in the same way as in Clorina in The Tragedy of Ovid.

Therefore, we cannot call Bussy D'Ambois a villain-hero tragedy, despite its alternative title The Husband's Revenge, because it is the lover and not the villain-husband who dominates the action. At the end, Bussy's heroic death in trying to rescue the lady and the treacherous ways of his opponents, leaves no doubt as to where the honour is due. Be that as it may, Ravenscroft's and Cokain's plays are sufficient instances of the prevalence (if not popularity) of the villain-husband type.

In the span of forty years that I have covered in this chapter (from Thomas Porter's The Villain, 1661, to Edward Ravenscroft's The Italian Husband, 1698) there is a persistent tendency towards the redefinition of the hero in terms of the villain. I have tried to show the various types of villains that exist in villain tragedy by a continuous process of permutation and combination. Settle's two plays The Empress of Morocco and Love and Revenge, Mrs. Manley's The Royal Mischief and Hopkins' The Unhappy



Conqueror had to be treated separately because they defined the hero in terms of a female villain. Mrs. Behn's Abdelazer, despite having a formidable female villain, focussed on the male villain which placed it in a category by itself. This was, by far, the most heroic delineation of a villain in the entire span of villain tragedy. By contrast, the rest fall into the menial villain category. Whereas the one represents bare faced villainy which almost excites the reader's admiration, the other depicts villainy practised by low stratagems which evokes "contempt and loathing" along with "pity for the distress'd" virtuous characters of the play. Into this category fall the self-motivated villains and jealous husbands. Their villainy, practised with utmost sado-masochism, is reminiscent of Jacobean tragedy.

In the installation of the villain as hero, there is an involuntary movement towards the depiction of a corrupt world: involuntary, because the dramatists still try to play up the virtuous characters making them victorious in the ultimate reckoning. Inevitably, however, the villains overshadow their virtuous counterparts partly because of the incredible evil they perpetrate and partly because of the equally incredible pallor of the virtuous ones. Here again there is an echo of the corrupt world of Jacobean drama only the movement there is deliberate rather than involuntary. The transition from Elizabethan



to Jacobean heroes marks a period of decadent drama seeking its sustenance from decadent civilizations; to some extent there is a similar trend in the transition from the heroic hero to the villain-hero. The conventionally corrupt Italian setting of Jacobean drama is substituted for by moorish settings which seemed ideal for the most grotesque villainous practices. The Jacobean preoccupation with death and more especially sexual passion as manifested in The Revenger's Tragedy, The Atheist's Tragedy, The Changeling and Women Beware Women seems to have had a direct bearing on Abdelazer, The Fatal Jealousy and The Italian Husband. Themes of relentless revenge in The Atheist's and Revenger's Tragedies are linked with the constant reminder of sin and corruption of human flesh in death. Sin is largely constituted of man's desire to take over heaven's prerogatives and become a self-appointed scourge of God. This along with lust that issues in adultery is found again in Middleton's two plays. Although the villainy is perpetrated by menial tools like DeFlores in The Changeling, these are essentially female protagonist plays. Beatrice-Joanna and Bianca's gradual moral decline is found in none of the paramour queens of Restoration tragedy who are thoroughly corrupt characters from the very outset. Intense preoccupation with the nature of evil which is apparent in the Jacobean dramatists' description of slow decay is likewise non-existent in Restoration



villain-playwrights. Their approach is more obtuse in the unchanging characters of villainy they portray.

Corrupt characters in villain-tragedy are regarded as serpents of paradise rather than denizens of hell. Whereas the world of Jacobean tragedy is essentially corrupt with its constant references to sickness, sin, adultery, incest, rape, murder, lechery, the Restoration playwrights try to show up the virtuous parts of the play as wholesome contrasts to the wicked. It is the honourbound goodness of Brisac, Baupres, Bellmont and Charlotte which is emphasized rather than Malignii's black deeds. Similarly the contrast offered to Laula, the Empress of Morocco, is in the triumphant end of Muly Hamet and his chaste Miramne. It is in this misdirected effort, to titillate as well as moralize, that the Restoration playwrights of villain-tragedy lose the tragic dimension of the Jacobean dramatists' depiction of a luxuriously and hopelessly corrupt world.

Loss of tragic dimension naturally led to a significant weakening of the protagonist. With the exception of Abdelazer all other villain-heroes are on the lowest scale of "heroism." To compare Almanzor with Malignii is to bring out the essence of this transformation. The same audience who responded enthusiastically to the heroic feats of Almanzor, applauded Thomas Porter's The Villain through its several revivals in the period. Perhaps



the Cavaliers "needed" the rant and bombast of Almanzor as much as the more sordid look at life. Both appealed in their very different ways to their cultivated pleasure-seeking minds. Langbaine saw The Villain acted at the Duke's theatre with great applause, "the part of Malignii being incomparably played by Mr. Sandford."<sup>17</sup>



## CHAPTER V

### LOVERS" TRAGEDY

The bulk of non-heroic drama which exists alongside she-tragedy and villain-tragedy can best be described as lovers' tragedy. Here the action comprises the trials of a pair of star-crossed lovers striving to overcome the social and political barriers to the successful fruition of their love. By definition tragedy must end in their failure to do so and their consequent death. It is the premium placed on love in these plays which classifies them as lovers' tragedy. The place formerly accorded to honour is entirely given over to love. Similarly the position of women and villains in she and villain tragedy is now taken over by the lovers. It is the return of the lovers from the comparative oblivion into which they had sunk earlier. The equal importance accorded to the hero and heroine makes it substantially different from heroic tragedy where the heroine is always given the inferior or secondary position vis à vis the hero.

This is, above all, a return to Elizabethan romantic drama, largely due to a revival of Shakespearean plays around this time. In his study of nature and function of the "new" tragedy Sarup Singh regards Shakespeare as



one of the major influences: ". . . as a master of natural tragedy, he was regarded as the final refutation of the heroic play."<sup>1</sup> It was universally acknowledged by contemporary critics that Shakespeare, though lacking the refinement of language, excelled in the comprehension of characters and passions.

He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul . . . he was naturally learn'd; he needed not the spectacles of Books to read Nature; he looked inwards and found her there.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore his plots were invaluable for the sophisticated pen of the Restoration wit, which could purge them of the indelicacies and restore them for the tastes of a "refined" audience.

Yet it must be allowed to the present age, that the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time, that many of his words and more of his phrases are scarce intelligible. And of those which we understand some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions that it is affected as it is obscure.<sup>3</sup>

From this viewpoint Dryden and others set out to correct Shakespeare. In Troilus and Cressida and All for Love Dryden re-worked Shakespeare according to Restoration standards. Meanwhile other playwrights became enthused about Elizabethan romantic plots featuring Romeo-Juliet type lovers versus a hostile environment. Operatic versions of Shakespeare's plays of fancy like A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest and Macbeth were very well received by by the audience. Beaumont and Fletcher, along with



Shakespeare, were successfully altered by playwrights. Their love for romance according to Singh is evinced by the fact that they provided Ariel with a mistress and cooked up a romance between Edgar and Cordelia in King Lear. It was not so much the plot devices like use of disguise, true identity of foundlings, use of masques, as the premium placed on the lovers' theme which made lovers' tragedy a direct descendant of Elizabethan drama. The playwrights and the audiences alike responded to this gentler current of romantic love which gained a foothold in the last two decades of the seventeenth century.

In lovers' tragedy the fate and fortune of two lovers is pitted against the hostile factors of their environment. Their sole preoccupation is love for one another, to which honour, ambition and revenge are duly subordinated. Their responses to each other as well as to their environment are sentimental in accordance with the requirements of their role. In the final outcome they die as innocent victims of fate and foul play. The titles of the plays indicate some of these characteristic features. One notices, for instance, frequent use of the word "innocent," "injured" and "fatal": e.g., Innocent Imposters, Innocence Distress'd, The Injur'd Lovers, Fatal Love. The titles are expressive of the sentimental trend apparent in these plays.

In his study of the theoretical evolution of the



eighties Singh refers to the "almost unanimous rejection of love as a proper theme for tragedy."<sup>4</sup> He goes on to explain the preponderance of love in the heroic play even though it was constantly attacked by critics like Edward Howard, Thomas Rymer and others. The kind of love that was "rejected" needs to be qualified here. By his remarks Singh makes it abundantly clear that it was love as a counterpart of honour rather than love per se which was rejected. The playwrights' admonitions to themselves as well as to their audiences were directed against the fustian of heroic love which generated a certain type of lover. In his prologue to King Edgar and Alfreda, Ravenscroft makes this distinction clear:

If Heroes too that are no more than Men  
 May be allow'd to tread the Stage agen;  
 . . . Lovers may be Lovers, yet not by fits  
 Rave and discourse Like Folks beside their Witts.<sup>5</sup>

Dryden's defence of love in his "Heads of an Answer to Rymer" makes an important pronouncement on one aspect of love, "love-pity," which was fast gaining ground among playwrights. "We are not touched with the sufferings of any sort of men as much as lovers" and hence love is "the best commonplace of pity."<sup>6</sup> The emphasis on "pity" as opposed to "admiration" hinges on this new concept of love which was described by Dobree as "love-pity." From Dryden's comment it is inferred that love became the dominant component of tragedy instead of being a counterpart of honour. Singh recognizes this in his statement that



Tate in adding the distress of the lovers Edgar and Cordelia replaces Shakespeare's tragic pity by the Restoration "love-pity." The domination of love-pity throughout the last two decades of the seventeenth century led to the emergence of lovers' tragedy as a distinct genre.

Instead of the heroic lover, lovers' tragedy concerned itself with the distressed lover. This naturally culminated in sentimental tragedy. In fact the difference between lovers' tragedy and sentimental tragedy is one of degree rather than kind. It may be too pat a solution to attribute the difference to a greater degree of love or pity. But an inference may be drawn from the increasing demand for a desirable combination of the two. "Pity and love" says Singh "became so deeply connected in the minds of poets that in 1695 Thomas D'Urfey in his prologue to Robert Gould's The Rival Sisters mockingly dismissed contemporary tragedy as "A Tale of loving Fools to make ye cry."<sup>7</sup>

Lovers' tragedy falls into two simple categories, domestic and non-domestic.<sup>8</sup> The non-domestic obviously carries over directly from Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher as also from heroic tragedy of the 1660's. Domestic tragedy was a new concept, coming into a sudden popularity despite its anti-Aristotelian canon, with the boost given it by Thomas Otway's topical drama Venice



Preserv'd. Not that it needed Otway to introduce it, for it had existed right from the pre-Elizabethan plays like Arden of Faversham (1592), Heywood's A Woman Killed with Kindness (1607), into Elizabethan and Jacobean plays with domestic settings, like the plays of Webster and Tourneur. However, domestic tragedy as we encounter it here, harks back to the "daylight-tragedy" of Faversham or The Yorkshire Tragedy (1608) rather than the ducal settings of Jacobean plays, placed within the splendor of the decadent aristocracy of Italy or Spain. It progressively inclines towards the tragedy of the common man, which comes into full force by the end of the eighteenth century.

Love, the basic motif of domestic as well as non-domestic lovers' tragedy, transcends all other values, emotions, and concerns. This is best exemplified by these lines spoken by one of the heroes of Motteux's Beauty in Distress (1692). In answer to his mistress, Placentia's plea: "Oh Reason, Honour, Duty," Fabiano answers, "Oh Love! Love! Love! Great love against them all."<sup>9</sup>

When compared with all other sub-genres, non-domestic lovers' tragedy seems closest to Heroic tragedy. The lovers are placed within a grandiose setting where they have access to heroic issues such as war, government and kingship. It becomes increasingly apparent, however, that these heroic issues are an extension of the environment rather than the latter being an extension of the heroic issues. All this



remains incidental to the basic plot of the lovers' misfortunes which is largely domestic. Domestic lovers' tragedy, by its very definition, precludes a grandiose setting and political issues. The homely environment of the domestic lovers reaches the very streets of London in The Tragedy of George Barnwell, Lillo's citizen play of 1731. Some of the more "typical" plays of non-domestic lovers' tragedy are William Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers or The Ambitious Father (1688), Nicholas Brady's The Rape or The Innocent Imposters (1692), Charles Hopkins' Friendship Improv'd or The Female Warrior (1700) and Robert Gould's Innocence Distress'd or The Royal Penitents (written before 1700, printed in 1737). With the exception of this last play, all the others were written within a span of twelve years between 1688-1700, and are best described as individual dramatic pieces by sundry writers, displaying their indifferent dramatic talents.

None of the contemporary dramatic historians mentions the success of any one of these plays. Not more than one performance of each play is recorded by Emmet L. Avery in The London Stage, Volume I. Neither he nor Baker nor Giles Jacob records any performance of Gould's Innocence Distress'd, which gives credence to the belief that the play had floated around in manuscript for nearly four decades, after which the poet's daughter had it printed in 1737. By then the age was looking forward to



more citizen plays like John Gay's The Beggar's Opera and had no palate for left-overs from the last century.

In atmosphere, then, each play vies with the others for an exotic setting. Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers is set in Sicily and treats of the love intrigues of the King and his General Rheusanes with the same Lady, Antelina. Nicholas Brady's The Rape has an English setting but is placed far enough back in history to ensure the same dramatic distance. Hopkins' Friendship Improv'd is set in Syracuse, Italy, and is once again concerned with the fortunes of the King's General Maherbal and his friend Locris, who is none other than the Princess in disguise. Gould's Innocence Distress'd takes place in "Moso, the Metropolis of Muscovy." Here the lover is the Grand Duke of Moscow who returns Oedipus-like to his kingdom after seventeen years of valourous feats on the battle-field, winning glory for himself and his country.

There is a common formal pattern in these plays which stems from themes relating to political structures. Romantic entanglements like lovers' quarrels, separation, familial interference are an integral part of each play. In The Injur'd Lovers Ghinotto, the father of Antelina, tries to mix politics with domesticity in bringing about the advantageous match of his daughter with the King. Since Antelina is pledged to Rheusanes and vice-versa this becomes virtually impossible. To this is added the



potential threat Rheusanes holds out to the King in his growing popularity with the masses. At the very beginning the King's remark confirms his uneasiness at this political rivalry:

Ghinotto, he must be Clouded, set in a Winter Sky,  
Where sometimes he may shine, but weakly warm.

(I.i.2)

In The Rape the political issues are more prominent. The conflict between the Vandals and Goths provides the chief plot of the play. Gunderic is the usurper of the Gothish throne. When the play opens the rightful King's family have been political prisoners for sixteen years. The outcome of the entire play is the uniting of the houses of Goths and Vandals by the marriage of the Gothish Prince with the Vandal Princess. The complications involve the popular Elizabethan device of disguise. The Prince and the Princess have been brought up as of the opposite sex in order to keep their true identity unknown for various political reasons. The play ends on a martial note with the fanfare of war, the rightful heir receiving military aid, and a political marriage arranged between the Goths and Vandals. The author's intention of making his play a "wholesome English" militaristic feast, is made obvious in the Prologue:

Try if tonight you can digest a Play,  
Cook'd in the plain, but wholesome English way.

• • • • • Nay, what is worse, prepare for Martial noise,  
Trumpet and Drum instead of Flute and Voice.



The similarity between the political themes of Hopkins' Friendship Improv'd and Brady's The Rape is too obvious to be treated as a coincidence. This can be attributed to the popularity of romantic devices like recognition and reversal which were well suited to a romantic theme. Here again the heroine "Locris" is brought up as a Prince and is secretly in love with the General Maherbal, passing it off as a platonic friendship between two young men. Zoilus, like Gunderic, is the usurper of Sicily and is hopeful of arranging a political marriage between his "son" Locris and Orythia, the only surviving child of the rightful Sicilian King. All this takes place against the background of internal and external strife. A Greek invasion of Sicily is valiantly warded off by Maherbal. Several revolts against the King and the growing popularity of Maherbal threaten the political structure in the same way as does the popularity of Rheusanes in The Injur'd Lovers and Ambiomer in The Rape. One becomes aware of the vast difference in the playwrights' own attitude to kingship in the forty years that elapsed between Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery and Charles Hopkins, Gentleman, whose "genius led him to tragedy."<sup>10</sup> The deference displayed in the sixties and seventies is replaced by a new daring in their treatment of the troubles that beset a crown. However, this difference is obscured in so many invocations, dedications, compliments and panegyrics, that it is barely noticeable at



this point.

The political basis of Robert Gould's Innocence Distress'd is the least emphasized element of the plot. The hero is Theodorus, the Grand Duke of Mosco (the name and title both sound straight out of heroic drama) who returns home after having won vast territories for his kingdom and made a great name for himself on the battlefield. All this is recounted by a couple of courtiers at the very outset--a typical Shakespearean beginning. From then onwards, with the unraveling of the incest theme, the play becomes a Restoration Oedipus Rex without the political and public connotations of the Sophoclean play.

There is a far greater emphasis on the romantic plot in all these plays. The heroes, as I have suggested earlier, are first and foremost lovers. Only then do they qualify as brave generals and valiant princes. When they are faced with a love and honour conflict they are often inclined towards the former, some more than others it is true, but being bound to one's mistress is at least as important as being honour-bound. Other elements of romance augment this as a lovers' play. These are elements found frequently in Elizabethan and Cavalier drama, like complex family relationships, use of disguise and impersonation, sexual themes of rape and incest and foundling children.

William Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers features so



many lovers that it is the best quantitative measure of lovers' tragedy. The play opens with the King languishing to a well-worn Restoration ditty, sung in the background to the accompaniment of flutes and viols:

Lucinda close or Veil your Eye,  
Where thousand Loves in Ambush lye;

(I.i.1)

This "lover's plaint" sets the tone of the play which continues to feature lovers in the same languishing attitude. Rheusanes and Antelina profess mutual affection but they are hindered by the unwelcome attentions of the King to the Lady. All other loves are one-sided--Princess Oryala's passion for Rheusanes, Dorenalus' (Antelina's brother) passion for Oryala, and of course the King's for Antelina. Like popular denizens of heroic drama, none is prepared to accept the futility of his infatuation. Each dies in the noble cause of love, but none more valiantly than the hero and heroine. At one point in the play Dorenalus brings up the question of Love and Honour before his friend Rheusanes. Dorenalus suspects his friend of playing false to his sister Antelina by accepting the King's sister Oryala in marriage. The situation is further complicated by Dorenalus' own preference for Oryala. He is proven wrong because the hero's loyalty to his mistress has surpassed his loyalty to his monarch. Here, both Rheusanes and Antelina's rejection of royal partners raises an important issue, namely, the extent to which the subject owes complete



obedience to the divine will of monarchs. Upon hearing of Oryala's love for Rheusanes, Antelina is stupefied:

Antelina:

Oryala, the Princess, oh! that mighty Name  
Has cancel'd all your Promises to me.

(III.i.11)

Later, after being subjected to a violent rape by the King, Antelina changes her stand and begins to question the divine right of kings which allows them to violate personal honour. Despite seeing his mistress dishonoured, Rheusanes remains loyal to the King. Here there are distinct echoes of Amintor's dilemma in The Maid's Tragedy. Rheusanes is urged by Dorenalus and his father to revenge the rape of Antelina. But he remains suspended between love and loyalty. At one point he approaches the King with a deadly weapon but plunges it into the heart of Dorenalus by mistake. This he takes as a divine reprimand against his sacrilegious intent. Finally, when he encounters the King, poisoned by Antelina to restore the love and honour balance, he is appalled at her irreverence for the crown:

Rheusanes:

. . . I wish thy Sufferings may quit  
Thy crimes, For Heaven has great Regard to Princes.

Antelina:

And it has none for injured subjects thinks you?

Rheusanes:

Not when they offer to Revenge themselves.

(V.iii.68)

This is one classic example of honour coming abreast of love instead of tagging behind. Rheusanes'

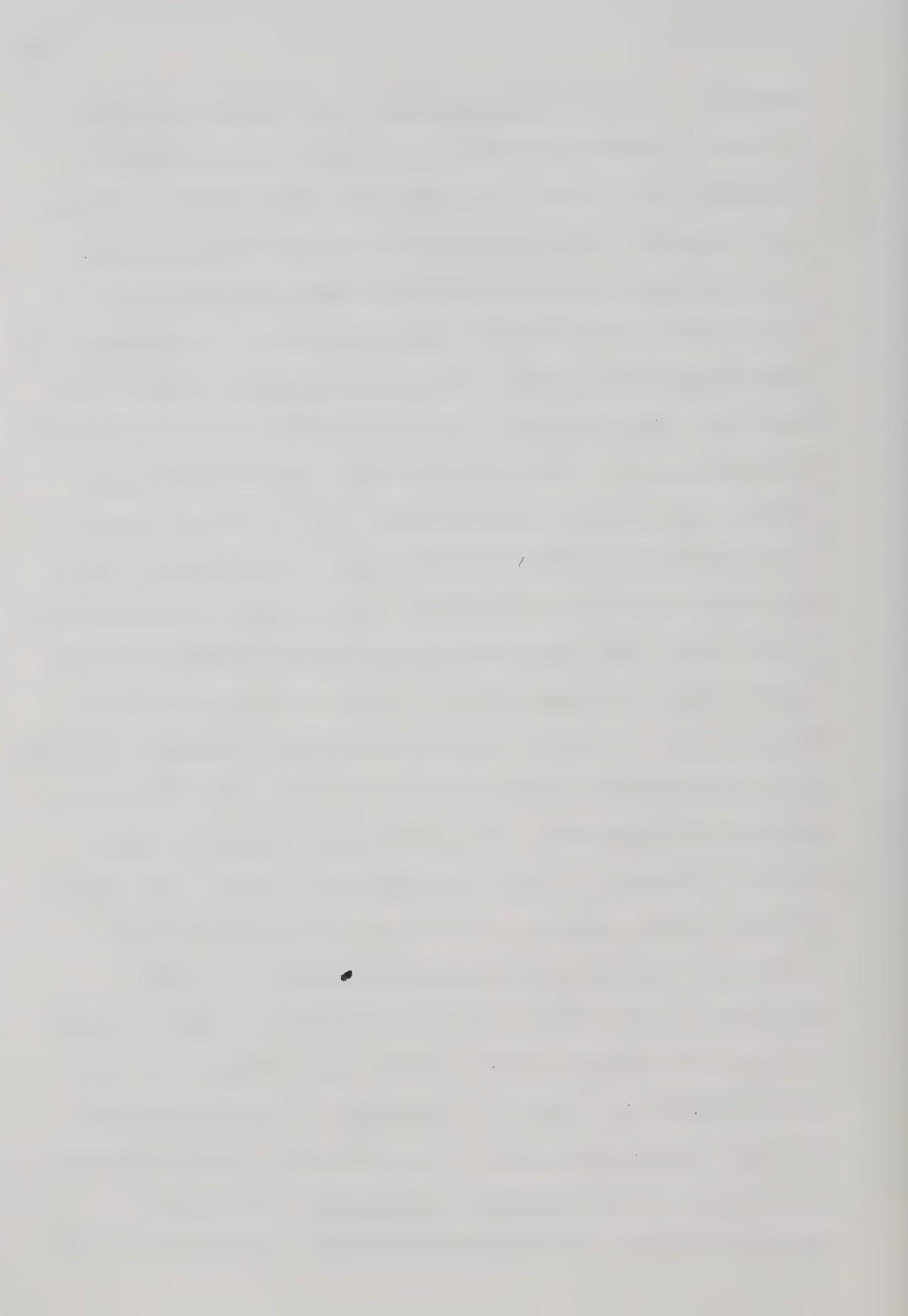


loyalty to the King brings him closer to the chivalrous and loyal Deleware in Orrery's The Black Prince, rather than to the lover-heroes of lovers' tragedy. What still classifies it as lovers' tragedy is Antelina's compelling presence throughout the play. Several similarities exist between her and Evadne in The Maid's Tragedy. For instance, both women murder their paramours, thus saving the hero from regicide. The very fact that a romantic heroine of the eighties can be compared to Evadne, without losing her romantic status and becoming a heroine of she-tragedy, proves her individuality. The Cavalier setting of warbling streams and shady groves seems a long way off from this historically defined context where she finds status with the hero and becomes more substantial than her previous airy image. This very quality leads Antelina (and who but Mrs. Bracegirdle could do justice to this role?) to join hands with Rheusanes and step into the place of the erstwhile hero. If this seems too pat a solution or too contrived an argument, one can examine it in the context of some other plays with the reservation that this was only one of the several trends becoming apparent in the 90's, all finally leading to the major change, the drama of Sensibility.

The romantic plot in Hopkins' Friendship Improv'd and Brady's The Rape involves the hero and heroine remaining ignorant of each other's identity for the greater part of



the play. In Friendship Improv'd the heroine, brought up as a boy, becomes powerfully attracted to the General Maherval, who returns her affection without penetrating her disguise. Affection between two men was a popular dramatic convention and the real surprise lay in the revelation of the "hero's" true identity. In The Rape or Innocent Imposters both the hero and heroine masquerade as of the opposite sex. Between the two, therefore, there is no love lost. In fact the "true" prince becomes a deadly enemy of the "fake" prince, after having suspected "him" of ravishing his sister. Here it is obvious that the focal point is not romantic love, since it is not until the very end that they shed their disguise and recognize their "love" for each other. Despite the fact that the hero remains in female guise for well over half of the play, he is much closer to the heroic hero than the effeminate heroes of she-tragedy. His impatience with his female attire, keenness to lead the rebellion against the usurper of his father's throne, avowal to defend his ravished sister Eurione; all contribute to the heroic image. Similarly, the heroine is depicted with a slightly deeper insight by the playwright, as one torn between her true and assumed self, unable to disclose or conceal herself. Not until she is accused of rape does the playwright deem it fit to have her identity disclosed. The end is consistent with the established pattern, namely the unity



of the houses of Goths and Vandals by the marriage of Ambiomer and Agilmond.

The importance of the hero and heroine is established by their superiority to all other characters in the play. Here, as in Shakespeare's romantic tragedies, no other character vies with the hero and heroine for prominence. Kings and Queens slide in and out of the scenes in both Friendship Improv'd and The Rape but they remain secondary characters. The royal parents in both plays, for instance, are faced with identical problems. Both Gunderic (The Rape) and Zoilus (Friendship Improv'd) are usurpers on their thrones. Both have made rash vows to kill their female issue, which leads their respective Queens to pass off their female children as males. Only when their pretense threatens their children's lives do the Queens confess this truth. This, however, remains a side issue in both plays. It does not threaten the main action which concerns the romantic pair alone.

With all this pomp of battle, politics and bravado one may well wonder what still classifies these heroes as "diminishing"? Ostensibly they seemed to have regained some of their lost territory. I am now referring to Rheusanes, Maherbal and Agilmond, in particular. Given a semblance of heroism on the battlefield, a few spasms of loyalty and a valorous demeanor does not make for Herculeanism which, as I stated in Chapter One, combines



physical strength with mental wisdom. The real hero is brought to a point where he disdains this "gewgaw world" and "rattle of the globe." Even Almanzor with all his bombast has a contempt for kingship apparent in his high-handed dealings with Boabdelin and Abdalla. As opposed to this, the lover-heroes' concerns are totally confined to their small Kingdoms of Sicily or Sardinia. Their ambition is as limited as their minds. The heroic concept of largeness and vastness of soul is non-existent. Therefore while they might suggest a slight amelioration of the hero's state they do not seriously disturb the diminishing trend. As I suggested earlier, these sub-genres do not adhere to a chronology. It follows that the hero's diminishing state cannot be arranged to suit a chronology either. There may be brief spells of resurgence as above, but they do not contradict my main contention.

In Gould's Innocence Distress'd or The Royal Penitents there is far greater emphasis on romantic love than in the plays discussed above. The Grand Duke Theodorus' love for Adorissa is the major issue of the play. That his mother, the Duchess, has committed incest with her son is treated as a major obstacle rather than the focal problem. In a flashback narration we are informed of the incest. The Duke's mother in an effort to upbraid her son for his juvenile rendezvous with court ladies becomes her own son's mistress. She stations herself in the meeting place,



instead of the lady, to surprise the errant Prince. But the surprise backfires, as Serephana relates to Berino:

Seraphana:

. . . Thus expecting  
His coming long (as she now inform'd me)  
Light Fancies touch'd her Breast, a Warmth succeeded,  
Which by insensible Degrees, at last  
Ripen'd into Desire.

(V.i.57)

When the lovers, Theodorus and Adorissa, learn of this and discover that the issue of this incestuous union is none other than Adorissa herself it is too late: their clandestine marriage has already been consummated. What follows is some of the same melodrama encountered in Gould's The Rival Sisters. The lovers' reactions are described in "Shrieks, Swoons and Groans." Occasionally Gould's verse rises above the Restoration cant and sounds somewhat Shakespearean. This is partly due to the fact that the scene is narrated by Seraphana instead of putting the audience through the agony of actually witnessing it, a practice not uncommon at the time:

Seraphana:

. . . Horror ne'er  
Appeared in so much ghastly Pomp before!  
Their being poison'd scarce has their Regard;  
They took not the least Notice they were dying!  
The other dreadful Mischief Sway'd in chief,  
And all their pain was swallow'd in their Grief.

(V.i.58)

Unlike the plays of Brady and Hopkins, Innocence Distress'd is set in the grandiose Russian court. However it is more concerned with the domestic issues surrounding its protagonists rather than with the political issues as



its locale seems to suggest. Because of its stately setting we still classify it in the non-domestic category. In The Rape and Friendship Improv'd the political theme is more pronounced in the martial engagements between the warring parties. In Innocence Distress'd there are no martial encounters; warfare is over and done with at the very outset. The part of the play that is not concerned with the Duchess' obsessive guilt is devoted to the lovers' inconsistencies, complaints of fickleness, meetings and partings. It becomes reminiscent of The Winter's Tale when Adorissa like Perdita recounts their pastoral romance to Theodorus:

Adorissa:

Remember when you first came from the Camp,  
From which my Mother's House was not far distant,  
A lonely seat in which you much delighted:  
You found me there all Innocence, unskill'd  
In courtly Arts.

(III.i.36)

Besides fulfilling the Elizabethan norm of placing the premium on romantic love, lovers' tragedy has some other plot ingredients that also derive from the romantic tradition. In all the plays mentioned above there are romantic sub-plots featuring a second pair of lovers who act as foils to the main couple. In Innocence Distress'd, for instance, there are Seraphana and Berino: Seraphana is placed under the false suspicion of having formed a liaison with the Grand Duke, and will not accept Berino's faithful suit until she has cleared her name. There is no



doubt as to the usefulness of this subplot. It scores the chastity of Adorissa with Theodorus' friend Agnon. The Seraphana-Berino plot also places greater guilt and responsibility on the Duchess who is the cause of their estrangement. The guilt foisted upon the innocents cannot be removed until the guilty party is led to a confession: in this case it is the Duchess' confession of her guilt, brought about by Seraphana's involvement in the affair.

Using sexual outrage in the form of rape, murder or incest was a favorite device of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. The rape scene of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus and John Ford's story of incest in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore' are prime examples of the same. There was, similarly, no dearth of rape and incest materials in classical literature. These themes were particularly suitable to the contemporary taste. That Restoration courtiers were inclined to appreciate the bizarre sexuality of plays and poetry is evident from their enjoyment of the Earl of Rochester's published and unpublished poetic and dramatic works. Brady's The Innocent Imposters has the alternate title of The Rape. The "impostor" and "rape" plots are so well-balanced and interwoven that it becomes difficult to distinguish the main from the subplot. The rape of Eurione is deliberately contrived by her disappointed lover, with mixed motives of love and revenge. In the usual garden scene where all rapes and murders are committed, he surprises Eurione in her evening walk.



Afterwards he boasts of his libertine ways to his friends and accomplices. The rape of Eurione sets several forces in motion, the most important being Eurione's brother Ambiomer's avowal of revenge and his false accusation of Agilmond. This cycle of complications is broken by the Queen, Agilmond's mother, who confesses the truth about Agilmond actually being none other than Princess Elismonda, whom she had passed off as a son in order to preserve her from the King's rash vow to kill all female issue.

A similar theme of rape is pursued by Mountfort in his Injur'd Lovers. The King surprises Antelina in the garden, and, since she will not willingly succumb to his suit, forces himself upon her. Both Eurione and Antelina are left distraught to be lamented upon by their brothers, Ambiomer and Dorenalus.

The Oedipus story repeated in Gould's Innocence Distress'd is carried a step farther in allowing Theodorus to wed his sister/daughter Adorissa. Similarly, in the relationship between the General Maherbal and Orythia in Friendship Improv'd there being fear of incest, the "oracle" warns him not to accept her. A similar incest theme is transcribed onto an entirely domestic setting by an unknown author in a play called The Fatal Discovery or Love in Ruins. Here again the Oedipus story is carried through to the same conclusion as in Innocence Distress'd.

Other Elizabethan devices used by these dramatists



are in the unraveling of the plot where foundling children are discovered to be royalty. This happens in the case of Adorissa who turns out to be the Duchess' illegitimate daughter. Similarly Maherbal is found to be the long lost heir of the rightful King of Sicily. This ties up with the theme of mistaken identity and use of disguise. Both the Prince and Princess in The Innocent Imposters are disguised as of the opposite sex. So also is the Princess "Locris" disguised in Friendship Improv'd.

In the plays discussed above there is some nostalgia for heroism in their frequent allusions to battles and rebellions. But the fact remains that it is domestic rather than heroic concerns, primarily love-concerns leading towards the problem of virtue, around which the plays revolve. The hero and heroine together move towards an increasingly domestic interpretation of love. Politics and war seem an echo of the past rather than a sign of big things to come. Domesticity of love does not look forward to an "All for Love" denouement. Playwrights delight in portraying virtue to instruct as well as please their audience. Congreve's dedication to The Mourning Bride explicitly states that "the Poets are instructed and instruct not alone by Precepts which persuade, but also by Examples which illustrate. Thus is delight interwoven with Instruction; when not only vertue is prescrib'd, but also represented."<sup>11</sup> Three years later in 1700 Charles Hopkins



in his preface to Friendship Improv'd declared his preference for virtuous characters. The play has no villain to speak of and the complications are mainly a result of misunderstanding:

A vicious character disturbs me when I draw it. And it grates me to delineate a villain . . . . Who then will choose to delineate discontent, envy and revenge when they have such fair fields as Honour and Virtue to range in?

In plays with a domestic setting this preoccupation with virtue and love becomes even clearer. Here we can view the lovers in a stark domestic environment instead of being dazzled by exotic settings. It remains to be seen if the playwrights took a definite step towards emphasizing the identity of their lovers by rejecting the outward trappings for homelier, more commonplace situations.

Domestic lovers seem destined to carry the tag of fatality; therefore all their plays' titles sound similar: Elkanah Settle's Fatal Love (1680), Thomas Southerne's Fatal Marriage (1694), Mrs. Cockburn's Fatal Friendship (1698) and Mrs. Pix's Fate of Disobedience (1699). As is true of most Restoration drama, these titles are the key to the themes of the plays. They state the prime obstacle in the lovers' way, which they struggle against until the very end before finally succumbing to its immensity. There are a few basic ingredients common to all these plays. Usually the lovers are already married when the action starts. This marriage has taken place amidst much



disapproval of the respective families of the hero and heroine and is therefore kept a closely guarded secret. The rest of the action, which constitutes the main part of the play, concerns itself with the hero's effort to placate his angry father (or the heroine's efforts to do the same) in which he may be assisted by a sister or a nurse. Meanwhile the lover-husband may discover a long forgotten mistress or the wife may come upon an erstwhile lover. Both parties, however, remain faithful to one another until the bitter end, when the inevitable bowl of poison is passed among the principal characters. At this point the parent becomes reconciled, only to encounter a dying child, and remains to lament his stubborn resistance.

This marks the beginning of sentimental drama which found one of its best spokesmen in Thomas Southerne whose plays are often compared with Otway's. The plots of both of his tragedies are taken from Mrs. Behn's novels, Oroonoko or The History of the Royal Slave and The Fair Vow-Breaker. In order to forestall any criticism, Southerne openly acknowledges his sources in Mrs. Behn. From The Fair Vow-Breaker he was able to distill some of the ingredients of domestic drama which steadily gained favour among the playgoing public. The Fatal Marriage or Innocent Adultery features the entire personae of sentimental tragedy. There are the virtuous wife, faithful lover, erring son, angry father or brother, loyal friend, devoted servant and the



newly found but great sentimental asset, the child. In all of the domestic drama I propose to examine in this section, these prototypes are present in different forms. For instance a play may feature a husband and lover of equal virtue and consequence. Whatever else is introduced the action continues to revolve around the pair of lovers. All lovers face one major obstacle which can be summed up as parental disapproval. Unable to withstand this they find means of escape through sacrifice and suicide, each party vying for a greater share of self-sacrifice. When all is said and done, the father is left to lament the fate of the lovers and offer whatever atonement is possible to the surviving partner.

Southerne's The Fatal Marriage easily comes to mind as the prime example of this sub-genre. Here the greater emphasis is upon the heroine Isabella, who even more than Imoinda in Oroonoko, Monimia in The Orphan or even Amanda in Love's Last Shift is the most sentimentally drawn character in this entire body of plays. From the very first line of her act, she is shown in the grip of dire misfortune. Bereft of a husband (who is presumably dead), beset by creditors, spurned by her father-in-law, gulled by her brother-in-law and pursued by an ardent lover, she is the very image of sensibility. Fidelity to her missing husband will not allow her to accept Villeroy's suit until she is pushed to the wall by her nursemaid and her cunning



brother-in-law Carlos, by constant reminders of her duty as a mother. Her acceptance of Villeroy is followed by an improbable speech declaring her decision to be free from any consideration for her son. The nuptials are followed by Villeroy's departure from the scene and the "lost" husband, Biron's arrival. Some fine pieces of dramatic writing by Southerne must have shown Mrs. Barry's acting talents to advantage. The instant solution to her "innocent adultery" comes through Carlos' attempt to murder Biron. When at this point Villeroy arrives to save his dying rival, he thereby gets blamed for the murder. All is clarified, however, when Carlos' accomplice confesses the truth and the entire event of Biron's exile is attributed to Carlos by Biron's friend Bellgard. A few madness scenes for Isabella follow, with the child thrown in for extra sentiment. The dramatic focus shifts between Biron and Villeroy who in turn assume the hero's status. The end is much more Shakespearean than Restoration in spirit: by allowing Villeroy to live after Isabella stabs herself, Southerne's play rises perceptibly on the tragic scale.

The greater burden of the play rests upon Isabella. When tragedy shifts to a domestic locale, its feminine bias is a natural outcome. Similarly in Fatal Friendship it is Felicia who takes on the greater burden, while Orazia in Fatal Love is the prime mover of the action. In Fate of Disobedience the responsibility becomes equally



divided among the various heroes and heroines. Already the changing pattern becomes clear. The heroines, following Shakespearean precedents, are becoming increasingly embroiled in the action, often more deeply than the heroes. The heroes on the other hand are occasionally emerging with individual characteristics. Though considerably diminished in stature after having shed their eastern masks and costumes, they acquire a new dimension by showing their private feelings in unguarded language for the first time in a span of forty years.

The first pair of lovers--or triangle in this case--is made up of Isabella, Villeroy and Biron in Southerne's The Fatal Marriage. Isabella, as I suggested earlier, bears the unmistakable stamp of her age: lush sentiment and overabundant tears. Southerne himself got so carried away by Mrs. Barry's performance as Isabella that he declared, ". . . she outplays herself," and went on to eulogize her performance beyond the written role: "I made the Play for her part, and her part has made the Play for me; It was a helpless Infant in the Arms of a Father, but has grown under her care."

Isabella's character is clearly defined at the beginning of the play. She deplores her widowhood, bemoans her fatherless son, despairs at the pressing creditors, mourns her friendless condition. Her language is in keeping with her sentimental image, a type that earned the



everlasting contempt of The Spectator.<sup>12</sup> She speaks moral cliches in most situations. To the child she admonishes:

My Little Angel, no, you must not cry;  
Sorrow will overtake thy steps too soon;  
I must not hasten it.

(I.iii.12)

To the father-in-law she sues for pity:

O, if you ever hope to be forgiven,  
As you will need to be forgiven too,  
Forget our faults that Heaven may pardon yours.

(I.iii.17)

To the nurse in answer to a slight query, she declares her general attitude to life:

Do! Nothing, no, for I am born to suffer.

(III.ii.25)

Sometimes her platitudes and homilies extend to inanimate objects with the same earnestness of purpose: they are excellent material for parody. At the gate of her father-in-law's house she verbalizes her sentiment:

Where is the Charity that us'd to stand  
In our Forefathers Hospitable days,  
At great Mens' Doors, ready for our wants,  
Like the Good Angel of the Family  
With open Arms taking the Needy in,  
To feed and cloath and comfort and relieve 'em?

(I.iii.12-13)

This last quotation is typical of her as well as her prototypes in other domestic tragedies. In the second half of the play there is a slight change in her which is important because most Restoration characters remain notably unchanged throughout the play. But she does not undergo an intrinsic change as much as she responds differently to her changed situation. With the appearance



of Biron, the night after her wedding with Villeroy, she displays her anguish in a few very well wrought scenes where the pathos is timely and the ranting justified. The writing here is comparable to that of Otway and some of Shakespeare: for the first time there is a total absence of extravagant conceits.

Isabella:

. . . Biron, my Husband:  
 To follow him to Bed--my Husband! ha!  
 What is then Villeroy? but yesterday  
 That very Bed receiv'd him for its Lord;  
 Yet a warm witness of my broken vows  
 To send another to usurp his room.

(IV.iii.61)

The hero is "split" into two persons: the lover dominates the first half of the play, and the husband dominates the second half. It is in his conception of Villeroy that Southerne shows an important departure from Restoration standards. Unlike the libertine lover who is out to seduce the heroine, he entertains an honourable passion for her which is manifested with utmost delicacy. The kind of conflict depicted in Villeroy was nothing new in Restoration drama. Even super-heroes like Almanzor entertained honourable passion for their mistresses, but it was clothed in so much rant and bombast that it became unremarkable and passed off as another aspect of Love and Honour. Here the emotion is presented starkly. Villeroy, in the ordinary habit of a European gentleman, protests his everlasting passion:



Villeroy:

When yet a Virgin, free and indispos'd  
 I lov'd and saw you only with my Eyes;  
 I cou'd not reach the Beauties of your Soul:  
 I have since liv'd in Contemplation,  
 And long experience of your Growing Goodness:  
 What then was Passion is my judgement now.

(I.iii.12)

In the last act of the play, after he rescues the dying Biron from Carlos' ruffians and finds Isabella distracted with grief, there follows some fine writing which closely adheres to the classical models like Dryden's Antony and Sebastian, in the tragic rendering of Villeroy. To Isabella's frenzied appeal:

Isabella:

O, they tear me! Cut off my Hands,  
 Let me leave Something with him,  
 They'll clasp him fast.

(V.i.72)

comes Villeroy's quiet rejoinder:

Villeroy:

Good Nurse, take care of her:  
 Send for all helps: All, all that I am worth  
 Shall cheaply buy her Peace of Mind again.

(V.i.72)

A fine example of economy of sentiment and sentence. Distraction sets in at the end which is expressed with a gentleness reminiscent of similar scenes featuring Ophelia, Monimia and Belvidera:

Isabella:

Nothing, nothing, 'tis a babbling world,  
 I'll hear no more on't.

(V.i.77)

Although Biron takes over from Villeroy in the second half of the play, he remains a shadowy character



whose appearance and disappearance make no definite impact upon the reader. The only character he encounters is Isabella whose horrified reaction to him adds to his ghostly image. It is an impossible task for the playwright to introduce a character so late in the play and try to make him step into the place of the hero. Southerne tries to do just that and succeeds to the extent that Biron and Villeroy are built on the same lines. Both are "gentle" heroes which is often taken to mean weak, especially because they follow an age of "super-heroes." Biron's reactions to Isabella's "innocent adultery" are expressed in lines of deep sorrow and dejection: earth-shaking anger which was the popular creed of Drydenesque heroes is non-existent in the gentle hero. No words like "lightning," "cataracts," "basilisks," "hell," "confusion" are used to "boost" his grief. His most passionate soliloquy expresses his helplessness before the grand design of nature:

Biron:

But 'twas the rancorous Malignity  
Of all ill Stars combin'd, of Heaven, and Fate  
To put it quite out of their Mercies reach,  
To speak Peace to us.

(V.i.65)

This is followed by a common-sense rejoinder which brings the issue back to earth:

Why do I tax the Stars or Heaven or Fate?  
They are all innocent of driving us  
Into Despair; they have not urged my Doom.  
My Father, and my Brother are my Fates,  
That drive me to my ruine.

(V.i.65)



It is unfortunate for the play that Southerne could not devise a better way of getting rid of Biron than using ruffians for the murder and bringing in Villeroy only at the end of the assault, so that he is too late to save Biron's life. This remains a weakness of plot, although it is obvious that Southerne could not have the two heroes together on the stage for any length of time. Taking the play as a whole, one must revert to the original idea that conceptually Biron is an extension of Villeroy. It is almost like one actor playing a dual role, for which the two roles must be carefully plotted apart. Between the two heroes and Isabella the entire play is balanced. None of the other characters is given much importance in his individual right.

Several new aspects of the hero come into a sharp focus with Southerne's delineation of Villeroy and Biron. The former is the "honourable" hero, a type that was to become the playwrights' model in the eighteenth century. Nothing distracts him from the path of honour or virtue: taken to its logical conclusion one can create a Cato from his rudiments. His last words after Isabella's death reveal a stoic acceptance of the end:

But I must live grown gray with ling'ring Grief  
To Dye at last in telling this sad Tale.

(v.i.79)

Biron personifies the human frailty which, again, proved a wonderfully pleasing characteristic of the hero. A



victim of the evil designs of men, he staggers through life with requisite self pity and remorse, another precept for the eighteenth century hero.

For the Restoration audience The Fatal Marriage was an unqualified success. Says Jacob, "This play appeared on the Stage with vast Applause, the distress being extremely moving."<sup>13</sup> Dryden's tribute to Southerne, written on another occasion, predicts the future of his plays as pace-setters for the eighteenth century.

The Standard of thy Style, let Etherege be:  
For Wit, th' Immortal Spring of Wycherley.  
Seem after both to draw some, just Design,  
And the next Age will learn to Copy Thine.<sup>14</sup>

A brief look at the companion "fatal" plays will bring out the newly acquired status of the lovers as heroes. Even as early as Elkanah Settle's Fatal Love (1680), the dominant characters are the lovers. "His muse," to quote Langbain on Settle, "was chiefly addicted to tragedy" and especially to lovers' tragedy. In all his plays the plight of lovers is the central issue. In deference to the new trend he departs from his usual grandiose setting and creates a semi-domestic scene for this play. Set in Cyprus, its characters are treated as creatures of the poet's fancy, somewhat in the style of Shakespeare's The Tempest. We learn of Olizia dwelling by the sea in her self-imposed exile, mourning for her husband who fled from her the night of their wedding and was known to be lost at sea. Here she meets one Philander who is mourning



for his mistress, Panthea, who was shipwrecked before his very eyes. The two mourners find solace in one another and the nuptials are arranged. On the very night of the wedding they are rudely parted by the appearance of the husband Artaban and the mistress Panthea. Both the hero and heroine find themselves unwittingly "perjur'd." Although Settle does not allow any "innocent adultery" (his characters are never allowed to enjoy the wedding night) he engages his principals in a complexity of emotions in which they become hopelessly muddled. If it were not such a melancholy fantasy, it would have all the ingredients of a fine situational comedy. Philander is loyal to his original love, but he begins to love Olizia too. Olizia and Panthea both love Philander. Artaban has a love and honour mixture in his feelings for Olizia on the one hand, and love at first sight for Panthea on the other. Out of this impossible situation they are extracted in the usual way. Of the four lovers three die while the fourth, Panthea, retires to a cloister. Settle calls Olizia "Princess" and Artaban "Prince" and creates Pyrgus as a groom of the chamber, but none of this sinks into the fabric of the play. The most he can create is a Twelfth Night type setting which is grandiose but not overly so. Much more important are the issues between the lovers which are always domestic.

Settle's play could be dismissed as a fantasy



abounding in linguistic absurdities if it were not for the distinctly modern conflict shown in the mind of the hero. Philander's uncertain definition of his own feelings for the two women Olizia and Panthea, evident in his vacillation between them, has existentialist possibilities:

**Philander:**

O ye Gods!

What is your world? What's life? What's human fate?  
When if your dooms our ruin have decreed,  
The nobles cause can act the blackest deed.

(V.i.49)

Beyond this Settle could not take his hero. By giving Philander a mere moment or two of conflict before deciding that his present loyalty and love lie with the "fair Olizia," the conflict is resolved. Settle's play also has the merit of becoming a transitional piece between the non-domestic and domestic setting plays. Although he tries to hold on to the courtly gestures and manners they are obviously out of reach of his overtly domestic theme. The lovers engage in the politest "D'Urféisms" to the very end, even when they are dying of various wounds inflicted by jealous love and faithful compliance:

**Philander:**

Can then my Kind and generous Princess,  
Leave all her greatness and her blooming Youth,  
And all for her Unhappy Worthless Slave?

**Olizia:**

To Die for Love is only Truly Great  
Nor is this all the Glory of my Death;  
Ye Gods I bring my innocence to Heav'n.  
Free from love's grosser and impurer Charms,  
I die a Virgin in a Husband's arms. [Dies]



In their dying speeches they express their lifelong devotion to love, which is the raison d'etre for Life. Divorced from honour and all its concerns love thrives as a purely domestic emotion in this gentle world of lovers. The result is a mixture of politeness with domesticity which makes for some degree of verbal incongruity at the end.

Mrs. Cockburn's Fatal Friendship resembles Southerne's play as also Otway's Venice Preserv'd. It makes no pretence to a semi-grand setting. Its purpose is clearly stated in the various commendatory and prefatory dedications to the author. First her purpose is to correct the folly of the Age:

More just Applause is yours who check the Rage  
Of Reigning Vice, that has debauch'd the stage,  
And dare shew Virtue in a vicious Age.

Second, she will adhere to Nature as against the highly contrived artificial manner of her contemporaries:

Safe from the gingling folly of our time,  
Whose Heroes die in Simile and rhyme  
'Tis thus you may support the sinking Stage  
Thus learn the Scribblers that infect this Age,

Third, her primary appeal would be to the emotions of her audiences:

Who was unmov'd at sad Felicia's Fate?  
Scarce cou'd the stubbornest deny their Tears,  
All felt your Heroes' Miseries as theirs.

The play revolves around the misfortunes of Gramont, the son of Count Roquelaure, who is secretly married to Felicia despite the usual parental opposition on both sides.



Bellgard (Felicia's brother) is promoting the Count's suit with his sister, and a wealthy widow, Lamira's suit with Gramont. Castalio, Gramont's lifelong friend who rushes to his rescue on every occasion, loves Lamira, who in turn aspires to Gramont. Here is an elaborate "lovers' chain": Gramont loves Felicia who is loved by Roquelare; Gramont himself is loved by Lamira who is loved by Castalio, who is Gramont's great benefactor. Mrs. Cockburn seems to have set out to make as many complications for her readers as for her lovers. All the basic ingredients for lovers' tragedy are here; "storm-tossed" lovers, disapproving families, loyal friend, devoted mistress, faithful wife, loving husband. Also introduced is a new ingredient which was to become popular very rapidly, namely the penniless hero. Pecuniary difficulties were never even hinted at twenty years before when the least a hero possessed was a small kingdom. In The Fatal Marriage Isabella was harassed by creditors, it being essential for the pathetic female to be penniless for the preservation of "virtue." Similarly a destitute hero was a recent arrival and Gramont is a fine example of the same. Already, it is obvious how fast tragedy was moving towards the realism of the nineteenth century.

Money being the biggest obstacle, the lovers are forced to conceal their marriage and even entertain other proposals. The Count offers to pay the ransom for Castalio



if Gramont agrees to marry Lamira. To save a friend imprisoned for his (Gramont's) sake he agrees to the marriage, only to leave the lady on the wedding night, like Philander in the previous play. Several debts of friendship need resolving, with Castalio being an earnest solicitor for Lamira's hand. The unfortunate couple, Gramont and Felicia, then discover their infant son in the hands of pirates who demand a large ransom. Again Lamira offers her wealth on condition that the lovers separate forever. After many doubts and reprisals, the lovers discover that they are inseparable. Thoughts of suicide are carried through in a final scene of reckoning when Gramont mistakenly stabs Castalio and kills himself in deep remorse, thus proving his "Fatal Friendship." Felicia, like Villeroy in The Fatal Marriage, is kept alive by the judicious writer presumably to preserve the "naturalness" of her plot.

This is unmistakably lovers' tragedy in the overwhelming importance of love, which gainsays honour, friendship, gratitude, filial duty, marital duty--the entire list of virtues always practised by heroes. Gramont's predicament is a complex one in his struggle within himself to preserve his honour or his love. We are back to the old conflict of love and honour but the innovation here is in the internalization of this struggle. The tragic hero's operative field has shifted from the battleground



to his own mind. Here he must resolve his love for Felicia against the issues that oppose it; his deception of Bellgard, Lamira, Castalio and his father. Puzzled by all these conflicting problems, he chooses the characteristic escape of weaker heroes, namely suicide.

Very early in the play Gramont becomes conscious of the irresolution and weakness of his position. As a hero he goes contrary to the entire canon by an outward show of weakness which is recognized and commented upon by his fellow characters. At the end of the play Bellgard comments on "human frailty" which is unable to stand the trials of Life. On hearing Lamira's resolution to lead a cloistered life he says:

Bellgard:

'Tis the best Asylum for human frailty,  
Of which Gramont is a most strange example  
He was by nature honest, just and brave  
In many trials showed a steady virtue  
Yet by one sharp assault at last was vanquish'd.

(V.i.56)

Gramont's awareness of his own weaknesses is apparent in his comments to Felicia in which he declares himself as:

A wretch but born to scatter Miseries,  
On all whom love brings near enough to reach 'em.  
(I.i.4)

One moment finds him despairing of this "load of life" to his friend Castalio:

. . . I want the patience  
To support this Load of wretched Life,  
That growing heavier as it wastes, leaves not,  
A hope of ease.

(II.ii.19)



But the next finds him deep in thought about the various demands of love and honour and whether he prizes his little peace of mind above the love of Felicia, his son, and the friendship of Castalio. This soliloquy ends in his resolution to give up virtue for love, which taken in the context of the play makes no sense at all. If he does give up his "honesty" and marries Lamira it is conceivable that he could still rescue Felicia from misery and want. Gramont, as is typical of lover heroes, is not given to much rational thinking and makes gross misjudgements with perfect poetic licence: if he sticks to the virtuous path it would mean sorrow for Felicia all the way.

My wife too, O my wife! She'll be thrown out  
 To wander through the World, poor and distress'd  
 To curse her fatal love, to curse her Husband,  
 The wretched source of bitterest miseries,  
 Who sees her starving and can give no succour.

(II.ii.20)

Then comes the resolution to "leap o'er all" the "Rules of Honour":

Castalio, my suffering Babe, and Lov'd Felicia,  
 See how dear you're to me, how strong my Love,  
 When it can turn the Scale against my Virtue.

(II.ii.20)

Nor is this as brave a resolution as it sounds. Several times in the course of the play he has occasion to regret his choice. Each time he is brought back to reason by the loving intervention of Felicia. For Felicia is the ideal heroine of lovers' tragedy. She stands firm in her confrontation with all the rival forces, especially in her



encounter with Lamira. She is conceived of as the stronger partner, being able to move Gramont from desperate designs on his own life, while giving him ample proofs of her love:

Felicia:

Love will supply my strength  
I'll labour for our Food, or beg an Alms;  
And we shall find some Friendly Barn to shelter us  
At night, whilst we repose our weary Limbs.

(v.i.46)

She not only rescues him from his morbid thoughts, but also plans for him and leads him towards better prospects. At one point there seems a slight attempt at role reversal between the hero and heroine, the hero becoming the clinging, meek partner, which was always considered a woman's privilege. This must have to do with the female authorship of the play and the increasing desire to please female audiences. After being persuaded to live on, Gramont sounds like an Ibsenesque hero:

Thou art my only Care; take, take me to thy Bosom,  
There hide me from my Shame, and from my self;  
Do with me what thou wilt, but let me never think.

(V.i.45-46)

Even the last words spoken about him do not make him worthy of a higher place on the heroic scale. Usually when the hero is fatally wounded he utters sentiments worthy of his "heroic" position, with which his friends heartily concur. Gramont's death scene sounds like a whimper compared to the blast of the death scenes of heroic heroes. First Castalio makes the damaging remark:



Gramont has every way been my destruction

(V.i.55)

then Gramont takes over and wields the fatal blow upon himself, creating a remarkable instance of damning (himself) with faint praise:

. . . now for the first good Action  
Of my Life, this to Castalio's wrongs.  
[Stabs himself]

(V.i.55)

The last comment made by Bellgard on the moral of the play says so little about Gramont aside from mild praise like "honest just and Brave" that it all but dismisses the hero without ceremony:

Bellgard:

. . . Let the most Resolute  
Learn from this story to distrust themselves,  
Nor think by Fear the Victory less sure,  
Our greatest Danger's when we're most secure.

(V.i.56)

At this point a mention may be made of Mrs. Pix's The False Friend or Fate of Disobedience. Its resemblances to Fatal Friendship are mostly superficial. This is another play by a female author which has the same moralizing intention:

A woman to contribute does Intend  
. In hopes a Moral Play your Lives will Mend.

Later in the Epilogue:

The Author who the Foregoing scenes has Writ  
Designed to show you Nature more than Wit.

Thematic similarities exist in the two plays in a concealed marriage, rival mistress, disapproving father, duels among friends. But Mrs. Pix still resorts to bowls of poison



and moorish slaves while none of this paraphernalia is found in Mrs. Cockburn's play. Another important difference lies in the economy of Mrs. Cockburn's characters and the cramming of unnecessary characters into Pix's scenes. She has three sets of lovers, each of them being allowed a wildly hysterical death scene. Neither is her main couple, Emilius and Louisa, any differently conceived from the usual semi-courtly tradition. Emilius' tragedy is external, in his entrusting himself to a "False Friend," Appamia. He is given no conflict within himself: in fact the opportunity for introspection (which is the natural forte of heroes who do not indulge in warfare) is ruled out for him by the author by keeping him off-stage for a large part of the play. Louisa harks back to the petrified virgin of the mid-seventies who wanders on stage "her hair down, Distracted, Wounded in her Bosome and Arms" presenting a perfect picture of distressed innocence. Therefore, while it is essentially a lovers' tragedy in that its focus is on the love of Emilius and Louisa, it makes no headway in the tragic genre. Mrs. Pix seems to have hit upon the formula for success so she declares her intention to teach and please and be natural. But she is not able to shake off some of the shackles of heroic drama. Therefore despite her attempts at domesticating her characters she often slips into "prince" and "princess." Her language remains stilted despite the unrhymed lines,



and each one of her scenes ends in a rhymed couplet. To call it a transitional play between domestic and non-domestic heroic and lovers' tragedy would be awkward chronologically because it was the year 1699, when the transition period was long past. It would also give Mrs. Pix too much credit, who was perhaps only confused about the various sub-genres and not much good at any. Therefore she filled her plays with virtuous husbands and wives after the latest fashion, and male and female villains after the earlier fashion, and took care to keep the good strictly separated from the bad. She nodded to the sentimental wave by introducing pathos along with melodrama: the result is a delectable feast for the denizens of the pit and a great inspiration for the hack.

It is a singular coincidence that in all of these domestic lovers' tragedies Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle played the two important females. We do not know the cast of Fatal Love, but it is quite likely judging from the casting system that Mrs. Barry may have played Olizia to Anne Bracegirdle's Panthea. In Fatal Marriage Mrs. Barry (as I noted earlier) played Isabella while Mrs. Bracegirdle headed the comic plot in the person of Victoria. In Fatal Friendship Mrs. Barry was Lamira to Mrs. Bracegirdle's Felicia: similarly in Fate of Disobedience the two played Adellaida and Louisa respectively. This attests to the histrionic abilities of these fine actresses who did Roxana



and Statira with the same ease. It is also symbolic of the emergence of tragedy into the domestic sphere where the feathers of the Indian Queen had to be shed for a more domestic habit, the person within the costume remaining the same. This is equally applicable to the heroes, but there is no Betterton-Verbruggen team here to complement Barry and Bracegirdle. Essentially, however, it is the same for the hero who puts aside his fancy mask to come forth as an erring husband or profligate son, subject to the frailties that may beset the slightest human being.

This analysis of the two types of lovers' tragedy, namely the domestic and non-domestic, is sufficient evidence of the partial return of the hero, from his beginnings as a heroic hero in the 1660's. Two obvious conclusions drawn from the above discussion can be used to support my view: first, the hero becomes the central character (along with the heroine) around whom the action of the play revolves; and secondly, his preoccupation with love is no less encompassing than the heroic hero's preoccupation with honour. Therefore it is clearly seen that the hero is somewhat redeemed although in an entirely different direction to that of the heroic hero. It was left to a much better dramatist, Otway, to secure his position by finding greater dimensions to this new concept.

One important issue that the lovers' tragedy looks back to is the idea of fate. The feeling that fate or



destiny is larger than the lovers is consciously generated in the reader. This is specially so in the domestic branch of lovers' tragedy where all the events are commonplace and realistic. The idea of tragedy is chiefly conveyed through the intervention of fate. Isabella in The Fatal Marriage has a few lines which verbalize this "feeling" one has in all their plays:

Isabella:

The rugged hand of Fate has got between  
Our meeting Hearts; and thrusts 'em from their joys.  
(V.iii.64)

This is a sentiment Shakespeare would have used in any of his tragedies. Here it brings one to the realization that with the humanization of the hero, destiny takes a form or presence of its own. Unlike Montezuma, Almanzor, Tamburlaine and Maximin who become the by-word for the destiny of all their fellow-creatures, Gramont and Villeroy are "ruled" by forces greater than themselves. They puzzle over fate, often blame the stars for their doom, but without the slightest suggestion of desperation, often recognizing fate for what it truly is--an excuse necessary as a "Greater Cause" for the lover's trials than the mere disapproval of angry fathers.

The return of the hero and heroine as lovers illustrates another important trait of the playwrights, namely their deference to the tastes of their audience. "'Drama's laws the drama's patrons give' is no mere flattery of 'patrons,'" says Singh with reference to the theoretical



rejection of love which did not find acceptance among the audience. Therefore even while they criticised love, the playwrights continued to give the audience what it wanted. Singh illustrates this impatience with appropriate examples from various utterances of playwrights that express their growing impatience with love. One important cause for this was Thomas Rymer's translation of Rapin's Reflections (1674) in which he condemns the French writers for bending "'all their Subjects to Love and Tenderness' and for making their 'heroes . . . smitten with another Love than that of Glory.'"<sup>15</sup> Rymer's agreement with Rapin is obvious in his praise of Greek tragic poets for not allowing "their Love [to] come whining on the Stage to Effeminate the Majesty of Their Tragedy."<sup>16</sup> Then followed a critical tirade against Love which included indictments by John Crowne, Nat Lee and John Dennis, but none, obviously, could do without the service of "that effeminate Prince."<sup>17</sup>

The discrepancy between theory and practice becomes very obvious in Mrs. Trotter Cockburn's attack on love in the sharpest possible terms in The Unhappy Penitent (1701),<sup>18</sup> and her choice of the "misfortunes of lovers" in this very play. She chose the subject, she says, "in Compliance with the effeminate taste of the Age." Similarly Dryden's attempt to rid tragedy of love led to such an uproar over his Cleomenes that he promised the ladies



". . . to make them some amends, if [he] wrote again, and [his] next hero shall be no Spartan."<sup>19</sup>

Finally, when all is said there is still the problem of the diminishing hero to be reckoned with. As I have suggested earlier, the hero was partially redeemed from the total oblivion of she and villain tragedy. I also stated that this does not seriously interfere with my projection of the trend of the hero towards diminution.

In the light of this can Villeroy be dismissed as an exception to the general run of weak lovers? When one looks at the heroes of Trotter, Pix and Ravenscroft they seem to be created to pander to their audiences' love for tears. Together with the heroines they prove invaluable for "purging their audiences' passions." Mrs. Trotter Cockburn summarizes the ennobling effect of tragedy which features these pathetic heroes:

Reward and punish; awfully dispense  
 Heaven's judgements, and declare a providence!  
 Nor let the comic muse your labours share;  
 'Tis meanness after this the sock to wear.  
 Tho' that too merit praise, 'tis nobler toil  
 T'exort a Tear, than to provoke a Smile.

Such an ardent desire to please with tears led most playwrights to leap the bounds of rationality and sink into bathos. Today, lines such as these spoken by Gramont can only "provoke a Smile":

Gramont:

So dear I hold her [Felicia] I could cut off these limbs  
 To let her piecemeal feed upon my flesh.

(II.ii.20)



Southerne did not sink along with his contemporaries and in this he poses a real problem for us with his two heroes. Then there is Congreve's The Mourning Bride (of which I have not said much because it fits neither into heroic, nor she, nor lovers category) with Osmyn posing some of the same problems as Villeroy.

Although there is a slight suggestion of an alternative to the heroic hero in Southerne's Biron and Villeroy, it remains well within the accepted norms of the gentleman-lover of non-heroic tragedy. In Otway an alternative is suggested which could have become the touchstone for non-heroic tragedy. The barrenness of a generation of poets is reflected in the fact that no one thought of using the Otwavian hero as a precedent for non-heroic tragedy in the eighteenth century. Only Southerne stood out from a generation of social scribblers in creating in his solitary play the shadow of the "thinking-hero." He kept his hero well within the diminishing scale in deference to the popular if somewhat obtuse tastes in the 1690's.



## CHAPTER VI

### THOMAS OTWAY AND THINKING-HERO TRAGEDY

After reading Otway's The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd one becomes acutely aware of the monotonous absence of realism, and the artificiality of characters, in many plays of the Restoration period. The problem, then, is to determine the extent to which they may be regarded a break from the existing dramatic conventions. They are the first "flesh and blood" tragedies we come across in the period. We tend to class them separately because next to Dryden's they have endured longest on the stage and in critics' memories; and for a while their author was regarded "next to Shakespeare the greatest genius England had produced in tragedy."<sup>1</sup> Such eulogizing by the worthy Goldsmith, no less than Charles Gildon's stout championship of Otway as the greatest upholder of neo-classic dramatic theory, makes it profanation to bracket him with Mrs. Cockburn and Mrs. Pix as a writer of domestic tragedies. He is notably different in certain respects from his contemporaries and it is for us to determine the extent to which his plays are both conventional and unique. Several Otway scholars and critics have grappled with this problem. Miss Taylor concludes her analysis with the statement



that "The naturalness of Otway has its roots in the artificial conventions which formed no small part of the Restoration world."<sup>2</sup> David Hauser's analysis comes to a similar conclusion that Otway does not abandon the prevalent code of heroic drama. What he does in fact is to "reanimate the dramatic mechanism of his age" to produce a more organic, more highly wrought piece of work, in his plays.<sup>3</sup>

To begin with the premise established above that Otway was in fact entrenched in his age, although prone to much more experimentation than his fellows, calls for a double standard on which to judge his plays. The hero likewise can be viewed on both ends of the continuum: on the one hand, the "swelling and blustering lover insulting Kings or affronting the Gods," on the other, the sentimental weakling tossed around by the slightest vagary of fate. Until this point in the study of the diminishing hero, it has been established that various other characters have taken over his function in drama. The power, significance and centrality of the hero, thus threatened, creates alternatives, and thus we have she-tragedy, villain-tragedy, and lovers' tragedy. The contention in the previous chapters has been that women, villains and lovers have taken over the characteristics of the hero: a hero is defined here in terms of the protagonist of heroic tragedy. Otway's hero does not fit into any of these categories,



although he derives from each one of these sub-genres. The peculiar phenomenon he creates in his plays is that of the "thinking-hero." Unheard of before in Restoration drama, it remained unrecognized by his contemporary dramatists. It was possible for the most astute playwrights and critics to miss the point because of the conventional periwigs and perukes which muffled the real identity of the hero. And as I stated in Chapter Five, the playwrights' own entrenchment in their social milieu did not allow them a deeper tragic vision. In this chapter I will restrict myself to Otway's two best known tragedies, The Orphan (1680) and Venice Preserv'd (1682), in order to bring out the final shape given to non-heroic tragedy with the creation of the "thinking-hero." It seems Otway's hero was consciously created as a perfect contrast to the Drydenesque hero. Both heroes exemplify the best of their type. It is a proof of the versatility of the dramatic milieu that it could create and appreciate characters as diverse as Almanzor and Aurengzebe, Castalio and Jaffeir.

The first performance of The Orphan took place in the Duke's theatre in March, 1680, with Mrs. Barry playing Monimia to Mr. Betterton's Castalio. According to Jacob "This is a very moving play and often acted with great applause."<sup>4</sup> Cibber in his Apology says that no one surpassed Mr. Betterton's Castalio. According to Davies, however, Mr. Mountfort had the advantage over Betterton



in his physical and vocal fitness. The greatest applause was given to Mrs. Barry who, according to Downes, became renowned as "the Famous Mrs. Barry at Court and City; for whenever she Acted any of those three Parts [Mönimia, Isabella, Belvidera] she forc'd tears from the Eyes of her Auditory, especially those who have any sense of Pity for the Distress't."<sup>5</sup> The play enjoyed a splendid career on the English stage till the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was revived less frequently after that, its last performance being held at the Aldwych in 1925. Its theatrical career is far more spectacular than that of most Restoration plays with the exception of a few comedies that enjoyed greater longevity. The appeal of The Orphan, as also of Venice Preserv'd to the modern reader, might argue for contemporary revivals.<sup>6</sup> Otway's unconventional treatment of conventional materials is the factor most responsible for this abiding interest.

In The Orphan he creates an idyllic setting of pastoral romance: nor is this setting incidental to the play. Acasto is described as "a Nobleman retired from court and living privately in the Country." Several times in the play he refers to his preference for this self-imposed exile. This lesson is frequently taught to his sons, Castalio and Polydore, who are eager to "purchase renown" at the court. Although the locale remains the same throughout, yet court corruption, swagger, bribery and



deceit find their way into the lonely hermitage. The two brothers' love for Monimia, their father's ward, leads to the tragic outcome of the play. Castalio keeps his marriage with Monimia a closely guarded secret. Polydore, overhearing their wedding night plans, suspects them of making an assignation and plans to substitute himself in place of his brother. Castalio arrives at the appointed place after his brother has gained admittance and is refused a hearing. When the events come to light next day with all the horror due to the unwitting incest committed by Monimia and Polydore, the quietness of Acasto's retreat is destroyed forever. Some of the blustering bombast, so typical of courtly drama, comes from Monimia's brother Chamont who arrives on the scene to defend his sister's honour with his life. This type of plot comprising mistakes of a night, so typical of comedy, could very well elicit the remark "Oh! what an infinite deal of mischief would a farthing rush-light have prevented."<sup>7</sup>

The basic dissonance in the central situation must have led the nineteenth century critics to see in it only a badly constructed plot and much indelicacy. Dobree accuses Otway of "having opened the door to the worst kind of maudlin whimpering" in his "tear-mongering" depiction of the principal characters.<sup>8</sup> It remains for the reader to determine for himself whether Dobree is justified in not ascribing any other motive to Otway and whether excessive



sentimentality is the lasting impact of the play. The plot itself is slight: a deception perpetrated in jest becomes a crime from which the principals themselves recoil in horror. The act of incest which constitutes the entire tragedy occurs within a few lines. There are no intricate sub-plots, assignations, murders, to pad the play. In its essence the play could be much shorter than the average Restoration tragedy. It could be dismissed in three acts: the first, describing the circumstances of Castalio's marriage with Monimia, the second, relating Polydore's mistaken adultery and the third, showing the effects of the crime perpetrated in ignorance. In fact the play is usually censured for introducing events which are unnecessary for the ultimate outcome, like Acasto's sudden sickness, or Chamont's long harangue with the chaplain. The focus of the playwright's attention is not so much on the plot as on his characterization of the three principals, Castalio, Polydore and Monimia. At this time critics were speculating on the "new hero" as a foil to the heroic hero, but none had actually attempted it in drama. It was put to test in Otway's conception of his heroes: Don Carlos (1676), Polydore and Castalio (1680), and Pierre and Jaffeir (1682).

Unlike his contemporary dramatists, Otway is never given to theorizing about his intentions or practice. Most of what he achieves in his plays is theorized upon by



the empirical observations of critics like Dryden. The concept of the "new hero" was speculated upon by people like Edward Howard, Ravenscroft, Nahum Tate, George Granville, Charles Gildon and John Dennis, none of whom could actually put it into practice in their various plays.<sup>9</sup> They were so deeply entrenched in their dramatic conventions that they could not take the leap from theory to practice. Otway, on the other hand, always the outcast from the intimate circle of the wits, slighted by "law-givers" like Dryden and Rochester, could venture in an entirely different direction with little to lose. He became the great "painter of passions" for which he ultimately earned the praise of the erudite Dryden. In 1695, ten years after Otway's death, Dryden was busy promoting an interest in a wider aesthetic in the preface to the translation of DuFresnoy's De Arte Graphica. He propounded his famous "Parallel of Poetry and Painting," a concept by no means new, but presented for the first time in such concrete terms. One of the chief tasks of the painter is "to express the passions which are seated in the heart, by outward signs." In poetry he sees "the same passions and motions of the mind . . . express'd." This talent is a gift of the Gods to the artist which is given to him at birth. Otway is foremost among the moderns in his ability to paint the passions. Dryden's praise here for Venice Preserv'd is equally applicable to The Orphan, since the



basic quality remains the same:

Mr. Otway possessed this part as thoroughly as any of the Ancients or Moderns. I will not defend everything in his Venice Preserv'd but I must bear this testimony to his memory, that the passions are truly touched in it, though perhaps there is somewhat to be desired both in the grounds of them, and in the height and elegance of their expression; but nature is there, which is the greatest beauty.<sup>10</sup>

This somewhat grudging praise acknowledges at least two aspects of Otway's art: first, his exploration of human passions and second, his adherence to nature. In essence, this is what the playwrights were striving for all along. Their prefatory explorations into the non-heroic and their unanimous plea for a "Return to Nature" would have led naturally to Otway's stand. His naturalistic concept of the hero was greatly admired in the early eighteenth century by discriminating critics like Addison. In fact, empirically speaking, it seems that Otway's hero accords much more to the goal that Dryden and others had set out for themselves than the respective heroes of their own plays. A careful look at Dryden's prefatory comments on the nature and characteristics of the hero brings out a basic discrepancy between his theory and practice. What he professed again and again to be his objective, he was never able to accomplish in any of his plays. It may be relevant to this discussion to quote some of Dryden's remarks and bring out their application to the Otwavian rather than Drydenesque hero. As early as 1668 in his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" he makes a far reaching statement



on the making of a hero: "as if the painting of the hero's mind were not more properly the poet's work than the strength of his body."<sup>11</sup> In his preface to Aurengzebe (1676): "I confess I have onely represented a practicable virtue, mix'd with the frailties and imperfections of humane life . . ."<sup>12</sup> Two years later in his preface to All for Love he makes a bolder statement:

All reasonable men have long since concluded, that the hero of the poem ought not to be a character of perfect virtue, for then he could not, without injustice be made unhappy; nor yet altogether wicked because he could not then be pitied.<sup>13</sup>

The following year, 1679, appeared "The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy," his essay prefixed to Troilus and Cressida.

Here he made several statements supporting his former views:

. . . The characters, which should move our pity, ought to have virtuous inclinations, and degrees of moral goodness in them. As for a perfect character of virtue, it never was in Nature. . . . A character . . . cannot be supposed to consist of one particular virtue or vice, or passion only; but 'tis a composition of qualities . . .<sup>14</sup>

The longest he dwells upon this is in "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting" where he compares "painting a head" in art with the "painting of character" in tragedy. Perfection in pictorial or dramatic art is dismissed as "unnatural":

Now as the idea of Perfection is of little use in portraits, or the resemblances of particular persons, so neither is it in the characters of Comedy and Tragedy which are never to be made perfect, but always to be drawn with some specks of frailty or deficiency.<sup>15</sup>

Later, in the same essay, describing the frailties of Oedipus, he says: "Such in painting are the warts and



moles, which adding a likeness to the face, are not therefore to be omitted; but these produce no loathing in us." Then he enlarges upon his ideas of the "natural" delineation of all stage characters:

The perfection of such stage characters consists chiefly in their likeness to the deficient, faulty nature, which is their original . . . all manner of imperfections must not be taken away from the characters; and the reason is that there may be left some grounds of pity for their misfortunes.<sup>16</sup>

He is ultimately in agreement with the Marquis of Normanby's words describing a perfect character: "A faultless monster, which the world ne'er knew."<sup>17</sup>

The evolution of Dryden's critical theory from 1688 onwards epitomizes the changed stand of his age. Although there is a growing tendency noticeable in all the playwrights to make an earnest plea for Nature, the practice comes through most of all in Otway's plays. His "naturalness" is much more intrinsic than the pseudo nature of Mrs. Cockburn or Mrs. Pix. Certainly he achieves what Dryden could not. Almanzor, Aurenzebe and Antony do imitate "Nature." But seen against Castalio and Polydore or Pierre and Jaffeir they remain untouched by "imperfections" or "natural blemishes." Ventidius' comments on Antony are meant to mirror the weaknesses that beset the greatest of men. In censuring his faults, however, he is made to be "more than man," which breeds "admiration" rather than compassion in the reader.



Ventidius:

Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow  
 For his vast soul; and then he starts out wide,  
 And bounds into a vice, that bears him far  
 From his first course and plunges him in ills:  
 But when his danger makes him find his fault,  
 Quick to observe and full of sharp remorse,  
 He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,  
 Judging himself with malice to himself,  
 And not forgiving what as man he did,  
 Because his other parts are more than man.

(I.i.347-348)

The "warts and moles" are so deliberately painted on Antony by Ventidius' description that they take away rather than add to his likeness to Nature. Was Dryden's Nature, then, meant as another artifice, used to substitute vaguely for rant and bombast, or was it meant as a positive force to enhance the appeal of his tragedies?

Certainly Dryden's precepts seem to suggest the positive value of Nature, and Otway's plays adhere closely to Dryden's precepts. Nature in Otway is a positive force, as exemplified by the stand of his protagonist. In fact the most important affinity between Dryden and Otway is in their concepts of the hero. It is in this light that I would now like to examine The Orphan in order to show Dryden and Otway's inadvertant influence upon each other, and establish the stand of the "Natural hero" in Otway as opposed to the highly wrought artifact of Dryden.

Castalio and Polydore in The Orphan fall into a web of their own making. Neither of them has any "heroic" attributes to justify his deviation from the mores of society. Born and bred in Acasto's demi-paradise they can



only dream of heroic achievements on the battlefield, never daring to propose a change to their god-like father:

Castalio:

I own I have Duty very powerful in me:  
And tho' I'd hazard all to raise my Name,  
Yet he's so tender and so good a Father,  
I could not do a thing to cross his will.

(I.i.11)

This tender love of Acasto for his sons and their strong sense of duty, not unmixed with resentment at their dormant state, is something new and akin to Nature. It was never said of the old Emperor in Aurengzebe that he kept his sons, Morat and Aurengzebe, from the purchase of renown on the battlefield or that they had any ambivalence of attitude towards him.

The secret marriage of Castalio and Monimia seems to be much ado about nothing. There is no good reason for Castalio to hide his marriage from his father and brother, especially when the former so obviously favours Monimia. Other plays with a similar theme, like Mrs. Cockburn's Fatal Friendship or even a comedy like Coleman and Garrick's Clandestine Marriage, have a far greater motive for concealment. In essence, then, Castalio and Monimia act irresponsibly, which is an entirely novel trait in the hero. Their deception of the good Acasto--who is in every way removed from the covetous old Emperor-fathers of Dryden--proceeds not so much from a perverse streak in their nature as from a romantic myopia. Castalio's deception of Polydore proves his ambivalence rather than the ideal



platonic friendship between two men, first popularized by the Earl of Orrery in Mustapha. David Hauser's comment about Otway's use of platonic conventions in the friendship between Pierre and Jaffeir cannot be applied in the case of Castalio and Polydore.<sup>18</sup> Certainly they are a far cry from the brothers Mustapha and Zanger whose truth to one another was far greater than their mutual love for the Hungarian Queen.

Otway shows Castalio and Polydore in the grip of a multiplicity of emotions. Instead of ranting and raving, they whine and groan at their perverse fate. This is what the word "natural" seems to imply in Dryden's writings. In his commendatory verses to Lee's Rival Queens he praises the latter for his "nature":

Such praise is yours, while you the Passions move,  
That 'tis no longer feigned, 'tis real Love:  
Where Nature Triumphs over wretched Art,  
We only warm the Head, but you the Heart.<sup>19</sup>

After Castalio is denied entrance into Monimia's chamber, he indulges in excessive "tear-mongering," throws himself down in despair and damns the entire race of faithless perjured women. He echoes misogynists and cynics in his well-worn tirade against women. This disorder of bodily humours is apparent in his expression of excessive grief, in which he hurls himself on the ground and languishes and rages in turn:

Till when be this detested place my Bed,  
Where I will ruminate on Woman's Ills,



Laugh at myself and curse th' inconstant Sex.  
Faithless Monimia! Oh Monimia!

(III.i.50)

Hurling oneself on the ground, however, is no sign of weakness in the hero. It is one way of exposing the passions which rage within a mighty soul. Therefore heroic heroes are often found in the same posture as the non-heroic. It is the circumstances that surround each which make for the naturalness of the emotion. When Antony throws himself down, Ventidius' comments suggest the grandeur of his fall. He is referred to as "noble ruin," Caesar's "rival of the universe." Antony's words deepen the Aristotelian sense of high-tragedy:

Why was I raised the meteor of the world,  
Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travelled,  
Till all my fires were spent, and then cast downward,  
To be trod out by Caesar?

(I.i.351)

The difference between Castalio and Antony's expression of grief is that while the one is stricken with his own impotence, the other laments his undoing by women. Then again the comments of Ventidius exalt Antony, while Ernesto plays upon the audience's sympathy by referring to Castalio's childhood days. The militant bearing of the one even in his supine posture excites our admiration, while the other evokes pity. Although both demonstrate their poets' ability to paint the hero's mind as required by Dryden; the homely grief of Castalio, perhaps, is "closer to nature."



As to "practicable virtue mix'd with frailties and imperfections" there is an explicit example of it in both Polydore and Castalio. Polydore's libertine ways are juxtaposed to his ultimate penitence at the realization of his crime. Castalio's awareness of his filial duty is combined with his deception of his father and brother. In the nineteenth century these inconsistencies were found most objectionable. But they make for the "humane deficiencie[s]" that showed "Men and Women" instead of superhumans. In his Prologue to King Edgar and Alfreda,

If Heroes too, that are no more than Men,  
May be allowed to tread the stage agen  
If Lovers may be Lovers, yet not by fits  
Rave and discourse like folks beside their witts.

. . . . .  
We have no Rant, no Rapture, nor high flight,  
The Poet makes us Men and Women all tonight.<sup>20</sup>

In a scene of final reckoning when the two brothers discover their respective misdoings and Monimia's innocence, there follows a general weeping and self-chastisement. Each tries to blame himself to show the other two innocent. This mawkishly noble acceptance of responsibility became the trademark of all sentimental heroes in the eighteenth century. It also evoked "pity for the distress'd" which was so important in Dryden's scheme:

Polydore:

[to Castalio] . . . I cou'd have dy'd  
With Love of thee, ev'n when I us'd thee worst;  
Nay, at each word that my Distraction utter'd,  
My heart recoyl'd and 'twas half death to speak 'em.



Monimia:

Now, my Castalio, the most dear of men,  
Wilt thou receive pollution to thy Bosom  
And close the eyes of one that has betray'd thee?

Castalio:

Oh I'm the unhappy wretch, whose cursed Fate  
Has weigh'd thee down into destruction with him.

(V.i.83)

In the final analysis we discover that the tragic flaw in the hero is indecision. Until this point the protagonist was always a victim of excessive pride: now the more "natural" shortcoming is his inability to make his choice or have confidence in his decision, once made. On two occasions when confronted with Polydore, Castalio deliberately keeps the truth from him. There is no greater impediment to truth except his inability to decide on a course of action. He persists in the deception despite Monimia's unease at Polydore's attentions and the latter's demand for truth between the brothers. His complacency is apparent in the belief:

. . . he'll sure forgive  
The first transgressions of a wretched Friend  
Betray'd to Love and all its little follies.

(II.i.29)

In this egocentric mood he approaches Monimia who upbraids him for leaving her with Polydore. To her honest resentment at his deviousness he responds with characteristic helplessness:

But, Oh Monimia, when th' hast banisht me,  
No creeping slave, though tractable and dull,  
As artful Woman for her ends would chuse,  
Shall ever dote as I have done.

(II.i.31)



Later, his reactions at Monimia's supposed perjury are as violent as his penitence is meek, a compound of excesses in either direction. For instance, he raises hell and fury at his father's intercession on behalf of Monimia, and later grovels before Polydore to exonerate himself. In his various moods there are constant references to "fate" and "heaven" whose boundless fury has been the prime cause of his undoing. He passes on most of his personal responsibility to the gods:

*Castalio:*

. . . If but your word can shake  
This world to Atomes, why so much ado  
With me--? think me but dead and lay me so.

[To Polydore]

. . . Our Destiny contriv'd  
To plague us both with one unhappy Love.

[To Monimia]

And all this is the work of my own Fortune  
None but myself could e're have been so curst.

(V.i.78, 83)

In their earlier heroes, Don Carlos, Polydore and Castalio, and Almanzor, Montezuma and Maximin, Otway and Dryden represent antithetical points of view. Otway gives them no heroic dimensions. He brings out the internal conflict rather than external strife. His rural seat has all the attributes of paradise including the serpent. But even his villain has a "golden" heart as is proven by Polydore's suicide at the end. Dryden's heroes exhibit heroic traits and are invariably engaged in warfare. His settings are far removed from the pastoral, in the heat of



battles and sieges. His villains leave no doubt of their villainy. There are several points of contrast between the two dramatists' conceptions of the hero, some of which can be brought out by an examination of the protagonist of Venice Preserv'd.

In A Short History of English Literature, 1898, George Saintsbury gives an overall view of Venice Preserv'd:

In [Otway's] own time, during the eighteenth century and even beyond it, Monimia and Belvidera, the heroines of The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd, were among the most favorite parts both with tragic actresses and their audiences, while Venice Preserv'd at least has kept to the present day a traditional reputation as the best tragedy out of Shakespeare, the only tragedy of great merit subsequent to the Restoration.<sup>21</sup>

The last revival of Venice Preserv'd by the Yale University Theatre in 1933 was far from a success. Goldsmith's assertion that Otway was "next to Shakespeare the greatest genius" did not survive much beyond the eighteenth century. What survives then is the unconventional manner in which he treated conventional materials.<sup>22</sup> This tendency, apparent as early as Alcibiades and Don Carlos, found its best treatment in Venice Preserv'd. Without an obvious departure from the heroic conventions Otway devised a unique rendering of tragic sentiments in unheroic language and characters. Time and again in our examination of Venice Preserv'd we are reminded of Dryden: "every alteration or crossing of a design, every new-sprung passion, and turn of it, is a part



of the action, and much the noblest, except we conceive nothing to be action till the players come to blows."<sup>23</sup> The action of the play is very limited. Conceived on the basis of the heroic conflict of love and honour it displays every possible variation of this theme, ending in the deaths of Pierre, Jaffeir and Belvidera. There is no significant action in the play involving the major characters: the conspiracy is quietly crushed before the light of day. The subtle changes of tension constitute the action of the play.

This time Otway shifts his locale from the bland courts and placid countryside to the troubled times of a great, historic city. Jaffeir's Venice is a hot-bed of conspiracies, scene of filth, debauchery and political corruption. The action is set amidst the clash of great events. Into this are introduced the misfortunes of the hero and heroine, who have the circumstances if not the pomp of Othello. Jaffeir's penniless state leads him to his father-in-law Priuli's door. His rebuff at the Senator's hand, who is not very different from Count Baldwin in The Fatal Marriage and Count Roquelare in Fatal Friendship, leads him to adopt desperate means to recover his self-respect. His liaison with Pierre is the beginning of the Faustian motif in the play. Brought into the conspirator's den where he encounters a variety of rogues boldfaced and simpering, he reaffirms his oath and offers



his dagger as a symbol of his pledge. Honourbound to his new comrades, he encounters Belvidera who tries to wean him away from his desperate design. As a trump, she relates to him the incident of her assault by Renault, one of the leaders of the gang. Just as he was driven into the scheme for personal and domestic reasons, so he is also driven out. While the conspirators are receiving their last orders, Jaffeir is on his way to the Senate to betray the conspiracy. Another series of oaths, this time by the senators, is broken in sentencing the conspirators to capital punishment. Subjected to Pierre's contempt, Jaffeir recoils from himself in horror. The dagger now back in his hand reminds him of the broken pledge. This time he tries to redeem his promise by sacrificing Belvidera and finally himself. Unable to do either he sends a petition to Priuli and ascends the scaffold with Pierre, when finally his courage wins through. At his friend's dying request Jaffeir plunges the fatal dagger in Pierre's bosom, to save him from a felon's death. Finally it comes to rest in his own bosom, and the pledge is redeemed. With the distraction and death of Belvidera the action is brought to "full repose."

In the early eighteenth century Otway's Jaffeir earned heavy censure. It was a matter of great concern for the factionalists to see a playwright use seditious republicans as heroes and earn applause from the audiences:



Addison became the spokesman of these ideas. In The Spectator, April 14, 1711, he objected to the hero on these grounds:

That this Poet has founded his tragedy of Venice Preserv'd on so wrong a Plot, that the greatest Characters in it are those of Rebels and Traitors. Had the Hero of his Play discovered the same good Qualities in the Defence of his Country, that he shewed for its Ruin and Subversion, the Audience could not enough pity and admire him: but as he is now represented we can only say of him, what the Roman Historian says of Catiline, that his Fall would have been glorious had he so fallen in the Service of his Country.<sup>24</sup>

It is the very weakness or moral flaw that Addison condemns which in a curious way brings Jaffeir closer to Dryden's changed idea of a hero. Nature for Dryden is "deficient" and "faulty": so also should any imitation of nature be. Jaffeir is built exactly on the "natural" design. His weak, wavering nature which leads to self destruction has the power of "moving the passions" as no other contemporary hero could. Again, he subscribes to Dryden's ruling that all passions of the audience are to be moved (not just pity and fear) in the course of the play by showing a multiplicity of passions in the characters. Jaffeir's passions range from an overpowering hatred and revenge to excessive love and meek submission. It is this preponderance of feeling in Jaffeir that Taylor refers to in comparing Dryden's theory to Otway's practice: "Otway's heroes were interpreted many times during the next two centuries, and some of these interpretations show



curiously whither Dryden's theory was leading."<sup>25</sup>

Jaffeir is then the man of feeling, not of action. He is too naive and sensitive to deal with the gross realities of life. Otway shows us a man who is as much affected by his own emotions and vivid imagination as by external events. The play hinges on the swaying back and forth of his emotions, with the alternating supremacy of Pierre and Belvidera on his actions. This quality of "drifting with the strongest tide" makes for the opinion that "Jaffeir, . . . is so much under the influence of each [Pierre and Belvidera] that he can very easily topple from his precarious perch as hero of the action."<sup>26</sup> However, it becomes apparent in the course of the play that Pierre and Belvidera's strength lies partly in their myopia. For Pierre, the loss of a mistress becomes enough justification to team up with blackguards and cutthroats to overthrow the state:

Pierre:

A soldier's mistress Jaffeir's his Religion,  
When that's prophan'd, all other tyes are broken,  
That even dissolves all former bonds of service,  
And from that hour I think myself as free  
To be the foe as e'er the friend of Venice.

(I.i.210)

Belvidera's zeal for her country stems from her fear for her father's life. Without realizing the consequences of it for her husband in the affront it offers to his masculine concept of personal honour, she entreats, cajoles, blackmails and finally leads him "like a sacrificial lamb"



to betray his friends to the senators:

Belvidera:

. . . Can I behold him  
With smiles of Vengeance, butcher'd in his Age?  
The sacred Fountain of my life destroy'd?

(III.ii.239)

Later, when her pleas have worked:

Delay no longer then, but to the Senate;  
And tell the dismal'st story e'r was utter'd,  
Tell 'em what bloudshed, rapines, desolutions,  
Have been prepar'd, how near's the fatal hour!

(IV.i.252)

Jafffeir's dilemma testifies to the broadness of his vision.

Aware of the strength of love and friendship, as also of their respective demands, he is unable to carve out his own way like Almanzor or Aurengzebe, and therefore becomes hopelessly entangled in the opposing claims. Pierre approaches his friend with a manly sense of indignation at his abject state and proposes a redress of his injury. He uses Belvidera as his trump card to win his friend's support in the conspiracy, not realizing its ironic implications. Jafffeir's enthusiasm is immediate, unquestioning. However, it lacks the consistent manliness of Pierre's approach. First he is overwhelmed at Pierre's championship in his cause:

Jafffeir:

. . . Bear my weakness,  
If throwing thus my Arms about thy Neck,  
I play the Boy, and blubber in thy bosom.  
Oh! I shall drown thee with my Sorrows.

Then he is swept along Pierre's stronger current to a more masculine affirmation:



Jaffeir:

. . . Swear!  
By Sea and Air! by Earth, by Heaven Hell,  
I will revenge my Belvidera's Tears!  
Heark thee my Friend--Priuli--is--a Senator!

Pierre:

A Dog!

Jaffeir:

Agreed

Pierre:

Shoot him.

Jaffeir:

With all my heart.

(I.i.212-213)

This exchange is pure emotion: from "blubbering like a boy" he swings to oaths and murders within twenty lines. In this euphoric state he meets Belvidera to whom he expresses infinite love and tenderness. His second meeting with Pierre confirms his course of action. The moment is well chosen in the lateness of its hour and chiming of clocks, as if he is about to sell his immortal soul. Earlier, he has admonished "Heaven" for giving him "Aspiring thoughts and elegant desires," now he is going to fulfill these at the cost of his own soul. Therefore his soliloquy "methinks some Fiend Knocks at my Breast" is a premonition of the temptation forthcoming. Pierre works on the idea of "Liberties, our natural Inheritance" and, lest the motivation become too abstract, adds to it "freed[om] from Priuli's base tyranny." Once more Jaffeir swears a futile oath, this time alienating himself from all heavenly and earthly ties and allying himself solely to the Cause:



. . . I do, by all those glittering Stars,  
 And yond great Ruling Planet of the Night!  
 By Love and Friendship, dearer than my Life!  
 No Pow'r or Death Shall make me false to thee.

(II.i.221-222)

Belvidera counterbalances Pierre's manly approach in the piteousness of her appeal. Renault's attempted ravishing becomes the best snare for her malleable husband. Jaffeir is touched to the quick by her complaint against his hard usage of her in giving her as a ransom for their trust and his word. Even while he argues of his love for her he discloses the dreadful design--"To kill thy father"--with an emphasis that suggests again the personalized revenge and excessive morbidity of his intention. Such bald presentation of truth produces the requisite horror, and she begins to undercut Pierre's influence by touching upon the very same sensitivity spots: his love for her and his sense of injured honour. In a desperate plea he invokes heaven for patience to carry out revenge against the very people to whom he had vowed eternal loyalty. Left alone he realizes that he is honourbound to two opposite camps, helplessly entangled in an impossible moral dilemma:

How curst is my condition, toss'd and justl'd,  
 From every Corner; Fortune's Common Fool,  
 The jest of Rogues, an Instrumental Ass  
 For Villains to lay loads of Shame upon,  
 And drive about just for their ease and scorn.

(III.ii.241)

By the end of the act his loyalties have changed entirely. The state of Venice need not be saved because



Renault is a "stinking lecher." The refuge in Belvidera's bosom which was sought rhetorically in the previous scene is looked for literally in his vacillation between shame, confusion and loyalty. This exemplifies, best of all, the existentialist dilemma of the hero. Confronted with the impossible choice of Pierre or Belvidera, he lacks the heroism to give up the one for the other. He imagines himself in turn as the celebrated betrayer of his people and as a lamb being led to the sacrificial stone. One moment he is smitten with guilt and doubt at his intended betrayal; he would go down in history as a traitor:

. . . Remember him, who after all  
 The sacred Bonds of Oaths and holier Friendship,  
 In fond compassion to a Woman's tears  
 Forgot his Manhood, Virtue, truth and Honour,  
 To sacrifice the Bosome that reliev'd him.

The scene of the previous night, being brought to mind, makes him resolve contrarily the next moment:

. . . Destruction, swift destruction  
 Fall on my Coward-head and make my Name  
 The Common scorn of Fools if I forgive him;

Later, when the two forces rage with equal intensity:

. . . Ah take me quickly,  
 Secure me well before that thought's renew'd;  
 If I relapse once more, all's lost forever.

(IV.i.251)

In the senate chamber he makes a heroic attempt to salvage his honour by proposing oaths to the senators which prove as futile as his own. Just as he broke all his oaths, so also do the senators. It is Pierre's entry that destroys his every hope of redeeming his honour. The open contempt



of his friend crushes his ego and leaves him defeated and baffled. Never in all of heroic tragedy did the hero accept such rugged blows to his honour. Otway uses the same trial of fortitude for both his "frail heroes," Castalio and Jaffeir. Each one is tortured much more by his own conscience than by the wronged party. Their suffering is like Samson's agony in Milton's Samson Agonistes: a Christian penitence for sins committed for which they impose the most rigorous punishments upon themselves. This is truly the "painting of a hero's mind" so that it becomes the focus of attention rather than his external attributes. When Pierre thrusts Jaffeir aside and calls him coward it is not so much Pierre's righteous indignation as Jaffeir's mixed reaction of acceptance and protest which is emphasized. This is again reminiscent of Samson's struggle within himself:

Samson:

Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with daily stings  
Mangle my apprehensive and tenderst parts,  
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise  
Dire inflammation.<sup>27</sup>

Jaffeir's agony becomes apparent in the humble supplication to Pierre with which he entreats forgiveness. Pierre's "wretched, base, false, worthless coward" is greeted with tears and more entreaties. His impotent rage at his inability to stand by his friend, Pierre, recoils upon the helpless Belvidera. The dagger has returned full circle to its rightful owner. But it proves as worthless as the



pledge it stands for. Twice he offers to stab her: each time he withdraws. She is more than just a loved object. At the lowest pitch of self debasement he seeks her sympathy. To his "Am I a coward? am I a villain?" she must offer the salve of a woman's unquestioning love and loyalty. She is more of a "friend" than Pierre, who is the object of his boyish admiration and whose masculine standards he can rarely meet. In a scene of utmost tenderness he hovers between his intense love for her and the need to fulfill his wager with Pierre. Once again he recognizes his impotence:

I am, I am a coward. Witness't, Heaven,  
Witness it, Earth, and every being witness!  
'Tis but one blow; yet--by immortal love,  
I cannot longer bear a thought to harm thee!

(IV.i.258)

With the failure of love to redeem honour, in Belvidera's futile attempt to avert Pierre's fate, Jafffeir realizes the end of his dearest hopes. It is this hopelessness that makes his plight relevant to us if we can penetrate the sentimental mask. Overabundance of sentiment, like excessive heroics, tends to overshadow all other characteristics of the hero. This is what Hazlitt found most objectionable in Venice Preserv'd. Shorn of this mask Jafffeir is like a Sartrean hero who protests against views of his world in which individual human beings are regarded as the helpless playthings of historical forces and natural processes. The protest is also levelled against all the



omnipotent forces that determine man's fate. In his invocation to the heavens there does not exist the challenge of the heroic protagonist. It only spells despair and calls for universal annihilation:

Bend down, ye heavens, and shutting round this earth,  
Crush the vile globe into its first confusion;  
Scorch it with elemental flames to one cursed cinder,  
And all us little creepers in't, called men,  
Burn, burn to nothing. But let Venice burn  
Hotter than all the rest: here kindle hell  
Ne'er to extinguish, and let souls hereafter  
Groan here, in all those pains which mine feels now.

(V.i.276)

A final proof of alienation from worldly joys is his giving up Belvidera. The scene of the lovers' parting diverts the readers' attention to the heroine who appears the more piteous of the two. Her plight involves no self-knowledge, therefore her suffering is in ignorance. Jaffeir, like the existentialist hero, is only too aware of the responsibility of choice and the anguish it involves. But Belvidera does not know the extent or implication of her responsibility. No doubt it was the irresponsibility behind her tearful remonstrances with Jaffeir that led Lord Byron to dismiss her cruelly as a "maudlin bitch of chaste lewdness and blubbering curiosity . . . whom I utterly despise, abhor and detest."<sup>28</sup> In giving up Belvidera and their child Jaffeir gives the first proof of his mature acceptance of his responsibility. He does not flourish the dagger dramatically any more, instead he bids her to accept the parting as an expiation of their sins.



the next proof of this maturity is to come in his heroic reconciliation with Pierre on the scaffold. Morality and metaphysics may forbid euthanasia and suicide but for Jaffeir these provide the rationale and order of his problematic life. He finds the "peace" that he sought for in his explorations into the various ways of life:

Jaffeir:

O Belvidera! I'm the wretched'st creature  
 E'er crawled on earth! Now if thou'st virtue, help me:  
 Take me into thy arms, and speak the words of peace  
 To my divided soul that wars within me,  
 And raises every sense to my confusion.  
 By heaven, I am tottering to the very brink  
 Of peace, and thou art all the hold I've left.

(IV.i.264)

On the scaffold he must redeem the pledge of his dagger according to Pierre's manly code instead of plunging it into the heart of a poor babbling woman. His death alongside Pierre is prompted by the same "dire Necessity" as is Samson's in Milton's verse drama. Samson is described by Milton:

. . . self killed;  
 Not willingly but tangled in the fold  
 Of dire Necessity.

Therefore his suicide is not anti-Christian. Similarly is Jaffeir's suicide justifiable. His last words addressed to the worthy senators bespeak a reconciliation with himself, just as Samson's last words to the Philistines suggest a resolution of his conflict:

Jaffier:

Thus of the blood y'have shed I make libation,  
 And sprinkle 't mingling. (V.i.285)



It was typical of Otway (though needless) to carry the play forward after the cathartic moment of Jaffeir's death. After his triumphant end comes the pitiable insanity and death of Belvidera. Unable to withstand the exile imposed upon her by her husband she, like Monimia in The Orphan, becomes distracted with excessive grief and love.

In Jaffeir Otway has created the most complex and tragic hero of his age. The grim irony built around him involves all other characters in a death trap. His ambivalence towards his loved ones results in their deaths. It is in his growing awareness and knowledge of the wider implications of his actions that real tragedy exists. One must question Dobree's statement that Otway is concerned with "exploring not man's courage so much as his capacity for feeling, even for self-torture." It seems to me that it is precisely an exploration of courage through feeling and self-torture which constitutes the main idea in the play. Here the hero is not born with the magic sword of Almanzor or the iron will of Mustapha. Neither does he command the legions that provide the trappings of valour. He has a smaller mission to fulfill: Jaffeir's activities remain underground and outlawed until the very end. The hero is a fugitive from the law, as well as from himself. This is diametrically opposed to the typical Restoration hero who is never seriously in conflict with his own self.



Therefore Jaffeir's courage, like that of Milton's Samson, shows itself after a long argument with his own self. Just as Dalila and Harapha are introduced to test Samson's fortitude in the face of former temptations, so also Belvidera and Pierre. By the end of it all, Jaffier's valour has outdone Pierre's in his ability to sacrifice himself completely altruistically and he redeems himself with ultimate negative capability for another man's faith. No doubt it was his belief in the "cause" which made Pierre's death easier. Although Dobree considers the play's "dignity" to rest solely on Pierre one may reverse his very words and say of Jaffeir that "there is really something fine. . ." [my italics].

Dryden's theory and Otway's practice thus brought the new tragedy into being. The changing emphasis of the theorists from Aristotelian pity and fear to "compassion" was to become the byword for sentimental tragedy. Dryden regards pity as "the noblest and most God-like of moral virtues."<sup>29</sup> Otway, as early as 1676 in his preface to Don Carlos, was speculating on the virtues of pity: "This I may modestly boast of . . . that it [the Play] has never fail'd to draw Tears from the eyes of the Auditors, I mean those whose Souls were capable of so Noble a pleasure."<sup>30</sup> This reverence for tears was considered his most original and worthwhile contribution to tragedy. A spontaneous realization of this is in Jacob's biographical note:



Great things might have been expected from so happy a genius as that which could write The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd, where the passions are touched with the most masterly strokes, and the stile is withal so easy, flowing and natural.<sup>31</sup>

In the eighteenth century it was fashionable to refer to him as "the tender Otway." Dryden and Addison were impressed with his "power of moving the passions" and by his "naturalness." His reputation grew with the advent of Richardson's novels. The "familiarity of phrase" that Addison refers to as an offence against the Aristotelian concept of tragedy is excused, on the ground that it contributed to the naturalness and tenderness of his scenes. Some critics, given to rigid neo-classical tastes, frowned on this undue emphasis on "tender passions." By the nineteenth century Hazlitt was censuring the "voluptuous effeminacy of sentiment and mawkish distress" of Venice Preserv'd.

Otway's other contribution to tragedy is neither fully recognized nor imitated by his contemporaries: his new concept of the thinking-hero. Too much emphasis is given to the hero as a "sentimental weakling" but there is no recognition of his bolder traits which bring him in line with Dryden's heroic concept. Aline M. Taylor draws attention to this: "The sentimental interpretation of Jaffeir suppresses all his bolder and more heroic traits."<sup>32</sup> But she does not elaborate these heroic traits of Jaffeir. She questions the modern reader's point of view:



This hero Jaffeir, who joins a conspiracy from purely personal motives, and who betrays it for the same, is he not something worse than a rebel and a traitor? Is he not a weakling, a selfish, vindictive sentimentalist devoid of all moral fiber?

The resolution to this problem she sees in "a balance of sympathy" to be maintained in viewing him without contemporary political prejudice. There is more to be said in his favour than Miss Taylor's cautious appeal to the reader. To rescue him from the sentimental mire one has to point at the heroism immanent in his supreme sacrifice to another's moral code at the end of the play. This in heroic tragedy was an impossibility. The hero had no notion of selflessness or sacrifice. On his momentary will rested the fate of millions. His magic sword was ever ready to impose his own moral code upon thousands of unwilling persons. The enforcement of his will, while it may adhere to Hobbes' idea of benevolent despotism, took its toll in the mass murders. Jaffeir represents the pinnacle of non-heroic achievement in that he deliberately rejects the heroic standards. Whereas Almanzor may have reaped glory either from the rebel or senatorial side (whichever side struck his momentary fancy) Jaffeir reaps infamy from both. This was the essential process which the thinking-hero was put through in order to accept the responsibility for his choice in the ultimate reckoning.

It was not so much a lack of heroism as rejection of it which Otway presents in his plays. The perfect



Otwavian hero is nowhere better explained than in Milton's Samson Agonistes: in a moment of self-awareness Samson brings out the essential difference between the heroic (physical) and non-heroic (mental) protagonist:

O impotence of mind in body strong!  
But what is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom?<sup>33</sup>

Jaffeir passes through this perplexing life gleaning his "double share of wisdom." He is not only "the creature of circumstances, kicked and cuffed by cruel fortune, but an innocent idealist turned out into the world ill-equipped to bear the buffets of cruel humanity."<sup>34</sup> He is the destroyer and preserver at once of Pierre in first betraying him to then saving him from a felon's death. Belvidera dies like a helpless child because it all proves too much for her. In deciding his own fate through a knowledge of all the alternatives Jaffeir re-established the supremacy of the hero: only this is an entirely different type of heroism which remained untapped by Otway's successors. Of his contemporaries only Dryden shows a prophetic awareness of it in his remarks on "painting of a hero's mind . . . ." Otway remains its sole exponent.



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

Sentimentalism became the predominant trait of the heroes of post-Restoration tragedy. Shorn of all their former heroism they became considerably less tragic. That domesticity precludes great tragedy is an apt pronouncement on the eighteenth century. The sentimental hero, as evolved by these playwrights, rang the death knell of tragedy. Nothing noteworthy was accomplished in the tragic field. Protagonists were mechanically modelled on the same lines till it became impossible to tell one apart from another. Descendants of Dryden's Almanzor, Maximin, and Otway's Jaffeir were no more than immature boyish-heroes like George Barnwell, Altamont and Norval-Douglas.

A brief look at these eighteenth century heroes can illustrate the change in the tragic concept. George Barnwell is the hero of Lillo's The London Merchant (1731) which is a remarkable instance of tragedy gone wrong. Lillo's view of tragedy is based on the questionable premise that its end is "the exciting of passions in order to the correcting of such of them as are criminal either in their nature or through their excess."<sup>1</sup> He believes that the greatness of tragedy is proportionate "to the extent of its



influence and the numbers that are properly affected by it."<sup>2</sup> Hence his attempt to accommodate tragedy to the generality of mankind and to "attempt to show / In artless strains, a tale of private woe."<sup>3</sup> Such a work was bound to affect a large number of people "by carrying conviction to the mind with such irresistible force as to engage all the faculties and powers of the soul in the case of virtue by stifling vice in its first principles."<sup>4</sup> To this end is George Barnwell created with the requisite "human frailty" in order that it may be duly corrected and vice shown in its true colors.

Barnwell's betrayal of his uncle, his master Thorowgood and, above all, his passion for Millwood are the kinds of flaws one finds in Otway's heroes. Lillo also introduces in his hero qualms of conscience which throw a moralistic coloring over his dilemma. While it serves to gain the audience's sympathies it does not pretend to the existentialist agony in Jaffeir, for instance. Barnwell's self-questioning amounts to a perplexed rhetoric which does not lead to self-knowledge:

Why, then, has heaven suffered me to fall? I sought not the occasion, and, if my heart deceives me not, compassion and generosity were my motives. Is virtue inconsistent with itself, or are vice and virtue only empty names? Or do they depend on accidents beyond our power to produce, or to prevent, wherein we have no part, and yet must be determined by the event? But why should I attempt to reason? All is confusion, horror and remorse;--I find I am lost; cast down from all my late erected hopes and plunged again in guilt, yet scarce know how or why?<sup>5</sup>



Lillo's attempt "to refine the age / To chasten wit and moralize the stage"<sup>6</sup> destroys a very fine tragic potential in the plot. His correctional approach to his characters first makes Millwood the chief villain, and then proceeds to turn her into a tragic figure. Needless to say that such liberties as he takes with his readers' sensibilities throws their sympathies off forever. It is an "all for love" theme: the protagonist forsakes everything for what he "thinks" is love, then forsakes love for ambition. This is not the stuff of which great tragedies are made. Antony's love for Cleopatra sublimates all his weaknesses until we begin to believe that weakness is only a misnomer for strength. Cleopatra, again, is never shown to be the harlot that "unmann'd" Antony: Ventidius' cryptic comments are taken as evidence of sincerity rather than sensitivity. Barnwell's love for Millwood does not survive beyond the offer of grace held out by Maria and her father (Octavia and her brother?). His interaction with each one of the others, friends, mistress, servants is on the sentimental plane. This is also true of most of Jaffeir's relationships but the difference lies between the "unthinking" and "thinking" sentiment. Where Jaffeir knows or is in the process of knowing, Barnwell muddles through with the "shuffle" of the ignorant. In the end he is hanged to atone for his uncle's murder but not before he has thoroughly purged himself by securing a universal



pardon so that his end is no tragedy at all:

Barnwell:

. . . I've learned the infinite extent of heavenly mercy; that my offences, though great, are not unpardonable; and that 'tis not my interest only, but my duty, to believe and to rejoice in that hope. So shall heaven receive the glory, and future penitents the profit of my example.<sup>7</sup>

We are left with the simple poignant truth (that might have sounded better in the ballad) that bad influence corrupts, good influence uplifts and there is no sin that cannot be atoned for. Cibber's account of the audiences' tearful reaction to the first Drury Lane performance in 1731 attests to the success of this formula.

Lillo's play is pure domestic drama in its total concern with the bourgeois merchant class. In Douglas John Home introduces a grandiose setting featuring aristocratic men and women. It comes complete with a secret marriage, foundling child brought up by shepherds, tokens of recognition and reversal themes. The vast difference between Lillo and Home's delineation of the hero is due not only to the twenty-five years that span the two plays, but also to the one significant development that took place at this time. Allardyce Nicoll mentions the growing popularity of Shakespeare which seems to have resulted in the part gothic, part medieval setting of Douglas and the romanticism with which its chief characters were conceived.<sup>8</sup> Lady Randolph is imbued with a morose sensibility from beginning to end. Douglas is simplistic



in his reaction to persons and situations, at times almost naive. His impetuous valour and trusting nature hark back to the same qualities in Almanzor. He seems much less the tragic figure than his mother Lady Randolph whose grand passion is reminiscent of some of Shakespeare's heroines. The final outcome of the play, due to the very innocence of the hero, makes the end pathetic rather than truly tragic.

Douglas is one of the better plays of the period in that it successfully captures some of the atmosphere and linguistic patterns of the past. Home's return to Shakespeare in the profound emotions and grand plot of Douglas is a step in the right direction, away from the formulaic dullness and emotional sterility of pseudo-classical tragedies like Cato. Based on the ballad of "Gil Morrice" it combines lyricism and romanticism with a conceptual simplicity. This is responsible for his "simple-hero" Norval Douglas who is simple without the semantic ambivalence attached to the word. He cannot be dismissed as easily as Altamont in Rowe's The Fair Penitent. In his flesh and blood characterization his presence is compelling enough, which evokes in his audience the right type of "pity for the distress'd."

John Home's is an isolated example of a playwright hearkening to the "Voice of Reason from a Distance."<sup>9</sup> Here "Reason" refers to the conscious movement away from formulaic representation of plot and characters towards a



more original and profound approach as suggested in Shakespeare's plays for instance. None of the other eighteenth century playwrights was able to throw off these conventions. This led to the diminished state of the hero through the latter half of the eighteenth century as well. It becomes important to consider, at this point, what caused the rapid decline of the hero following Dryden's heroic representations in the 1660's and why he continued in his unheroic state throughout the eighteenth century.

The external causes for the decline have been discussed in the introductory chapter. While they are important they constitute only a part of the process of decline. That the playwrights remained aware of and somewhat deferential to their public is apparent in Dryden's dedication to Love Triumphant (1693) where he explained his failure to observe dramatic rules:

. . . this is a fault I should often practice, if I were to write again, because it is agreeable to the English Genius. We love variety more than any other nation; and so long as the audience will not be pleased without it, the poet is oblig'd to humour them.<sup>10</sup>

Earlier, in 1679, in a bitter, uncompromising mood, he had acknowledged the audiences' importance in his assertion that "nothing but madness can please madmen, and a poet must be of a piece with the spectators, to gain a reputation with them."<sup>11</sup>

This should not suggest, however, that the ordinary rabble were the dictators of public taste. To a great



extent they were influenced by what the boxes appreciated, for one notices Pepys looking around to see if the applause was forthcoming from the King's or "Lord Chamberlayne's" box before he put in his piece. Fortunately for the intelligentsia, Dryden kept at his task of turning out lengthy critical prefaces and introductions, introducing those who cared to read to the new literary trends. Therefore the critical tastes and theory came around full circle to Dryden who became the arbiter of public taste. This did not work as simply as it sounds. It was the age of success formulae. Any pronouncement made by Dryden, any experiment in his plays, was pounced upon by servile imitators and hack writers who considered it their path to fame and riches. Therefore, while the public was being educated on the one hand, it was being fed on thrillers and tear-jerkers on the other. It is unfortunate that this was a barren age, especially compared to the previous one which produced a host of excellent poets and playwrights. Any search for original thinkers among these playwrights results in the embarrassing awareness of a total absence of any save Dryden and his younger contemporaries Otway and Lee.

It is largely due to this paucity of talent that not only the hero, but drama as a whole became nondescript at the turn of the century, till all that were left for drama anthologies were moral parables in the form of prose



dialogue, namely The London Merchant and The Gamester.

One can speculate at length on what would have happened if a group of original playwrights had decided to work upon Dryden's changed stand for tragedy as exemplified in Aurengzebe and All for Love: it was only the year 1677, which still gave them ample time to create a new kind of excellence for the hero. Perhaps it would have led to a Shakespearean revival in the fullest sense of the word. If Otway had introduced less of the pathetic element and Congreve turned his energies towards genuine tragedy instead of the cloak and dagger type romance in The Mourning Bride this might have been possible. Each one, however, struck out for himself as a result of which we are left to deal with sporadic genius which did not amount to anything as a whole. This paucity of dramatic genius can be demonstrated for the eighteenth century as well. Douglas and The Fair Penitent among a few others remained isolated instances of good tragedy. None of them, as I will discuss later, found a lasting response either among the playwrights or the audience. In his Prologue to The Ambitious Stepmother Rowe makes a prophetic pronouncement on the age when he says:

O' cou'd this Age's writers hope to Find  
An Audience to Compassion thus inclin'd.

The question confronted most often by a study of this kind is simply what contribution does it have to make? We are past the stage of becoming seriously affected by



pronouncements such as Knights' which dismisses Restoration tragedy as well as comedy as being "insufferably dull." We realize, nevertheless, that aside from Dryden, Otway and Lee, the dramatic literature of the period is seen as a mass of indistinguishable and undistinguished material. Attempts to classify or categorize it have always been confined to the work of the three major playwrights mentioned above, just as Restoration comedy is judged on the basis of the eleven plays of Etherage, Wycherley and Congreve. Therefore it has been the aim of my study to bring into focus some of the lesser known trends of the period so that it may be seen in its entirety instead of a "dark age of tragedy." I see Dryden and Otway's heroes as representing either two diametrically opposed pinnacles or the opposite ends of a spectrum. To advance this analogical description further, it would seem appropriate that the space between Dryden and Otway (with notable exceptions such as Lee) be seen as filled with an undefined bulk of non-heroes sunk into oblivion. With a recognition of the various "types" of heroes in this indistinguishable mass, one begins to see the link between Dryden and Otway. It is not enough to say that Otway practised what Dryden preached. The discrepancies and similarities of the two must take into consideration all that was practised and preached while the "heroic hero" evolved into the "thinking hero."



Three types of plays have been singled out as "she," "villain" and "lovers'" tragedy in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. As I have demonstrated by citing from the plays themselves, these are distinct categories which were evolved in response to various demands of the play-going public and availability of players. She-tragedy, for instance, responded to the growing female audiences and the talented stage actresses who were a major box office asset. In an age where the most fashionable wits of the time ridiculed the entire female sex in tragedy as well as comedy, it is interesting to notice how quickly she-tragedy gained a foothold. As late as 1677 Sir Charles Sedley penned these flippant remarks in his Antony and Cleopatra:

Women should sit like idle passengers  
While the tall ship some able seaman stirs.  
Wisdom, high courage, Piety are Vain,  
If o'er the wise and brave a woman reign.

That Sedley was not the spokesman for his age is obvious by the popularity of she-tragedy. In evolving this genre the playwrights looked back to the Greeks and established a precedent for their eighteenth century successors. Female virtue is heavily emphasized in these plays along with a new feminism as displayed in the Amazonian heroines of D'Urfey and William Phillips.<sup>12</sup> As is the case with most trends introduced in the Restoration, there was no one to explore it seriously so that it remained in the hands of sundry writers who dabbled in it with indifferent



literary success.

It was Rowe's adept handling of a feminine theme which provided some of its potential merit for the eighteenth century stage. Rowe's Calista in The Fair Penitent (1703) takes her cue from her prototypes in the plays of John Banks and other "she"-tragedians. Without exaggerating its literary merit or its popular appeal, it may be worthwhile to dwell upon Rowe's The Fair Penitent to illustrate the potential popularity of the genre in the eighteenth century, if only it had had intelligent adherents. The theme of the play, derived from Massinger's The Fatal Dowry, has all the attributes of a Jacobean play. Calista, like Beaumelle, Beatrice and Tamira is conceived of as a flesh and blood figure subject to human frailties which are not treated with apology or a promise of salvation. Without going into a detailed analysis of the play I would like to point at her complete dominance of the dramatic action to the virtual exclusion of the male protagonist. Here Altamont is imbued with excessive sentimentality which does not include any traits of the thinking-hero. His espousal of Calista at her obvious repugnance is only one indication of his weak, wavering, unthinking nature. The heroine is, on the other hand, treated with utmost care by the playwright to maintain the sympathy of his audience for her and at the same time not make another Jane Shore out of her. She makes the play



entirely her own so much so that even the "Gallant gay Lothario" is no real challenge. She fulfills Rowe's promise to "show [you] men and women as they are" in the sense that she is far more petulant than penitent throughout the play. A good contrast here is that of George Barnwell who is more worthy of being called "The Fair(?) Penitent." The viability and virtuosity of she-tragedy are evident by Rowe's example. The fact that even he could not sustain it and turned about to introduce pathetic female figures, like Jane Shore and Jane Gray as protagonists, led to a rapid decline of this genre.

My second category of villain tragedy does not have any illustrious successor in the eighteenth century. Speaking of villain-heroes, one rarely thinks of Dryden's Maximin and Mrs. Behn's Abdelazer, so conditioned are we to regarding Marlowe as the sole practitioner of villain tragedy. But the age abounds in villains of various descriptions from the domestic to the heroic villains. It is the presence of the villain-hero that makes for the complexity in the definition of the hero. If not for the villain hero the categorization would have been simple: the heroic hero dominating the first half of the century and the non-heroic hero taking over the latter half. The villain hero does not fit into either classification. Abdelazer despite his villainous role, has distinct heroic possibilities, while the virtuous in the play cannot in



justice be referred to as "heroes" at all. His claim in the play that "Love and ambition are the same to me / In either I'll no rivals brook," sounds distinctly heroic. Though a villain, he is conceived with heroic materials (especially as opposed to the virtuous persons in the play) so that the very vice in him begins to look like virtue.

Other villain heroes are conceived of on a much lesser scale yet they dominate and manipulate the entire action which makes them the protagonists of their plays, for instance Malignii in The Villain and Dampierre in The Unnatural Brother. It is in this genre that the playwrights have indulged in the greatest excesses. No detail, however lurid, is spared to the audience in plays like Cokain's Ovid. This attests to the audience's love for variety, no matter at what aesthetic cost.

Lovers' tragedy, with its emphasis on the fate and fortunes of a pair of love-lorn worthies, kicked and cuffed by fate, became a precursor of sentimental tragedy. Its themes of rape and incest were replaced by gentler themes of domestic woe. This considerably diminished the remote romanticism of lovers' tragedy and brought it closer to the daylight scene of contemporary London.

From the blustering bombast of the heroic hero to the "fainting away" of Phaeton and Altamont is a vast distance. To fill this gap we have the multi-heroes of



she, villain and lovers' tragedy. Martian's words in The Roman Bride's Revenge (as I stated in Chapter Three) sum up the position of the heroes of she-tragedy. Nothing in heroic tragedy can equal his "No, no I am the last and worst of Men." Mustapha's dejection at his father's continuing ill will makes him despair of his life, but even while he willingly goes to his death he carries his heroic grandeur till the end. Martian, on the other hand, literally and metaphorically "crawls upon the earth" to get his last pardon. Rothstein's description of John Banks' heroes is easily applied to all the heroes of she-tragedy. According to Rothstein, Banks creates the "stupid hero" who cannot think though he feels immensely. In his plays the distinction between male and female characters is obliterated. Says Rothstein, "Women are the principals and the men are womanish."<sup>13</sup> Aside from the feminine role assigned to him he is constantly in a state of dejection and hopelessness. He excites pity while the heroine is used to excite admiration. Here it is evident that he borrows the weaknesses of the frail hero without combining them with his strengths.

A similar case can be stated for the hero of villain tragedy who is as gullible as he is good. He, like the hero of the she-tragedy, does not have the largeness of mind which was an important trait of the heroic or the thinking-hero. Nagged by doubts and suspicions, he plunges



his dagger around indiscriminately, until he is made aware of the falseness of his suspicions. Love, which is the redeeming feature of the hero of she-tragedy, is obliterated by a desire for revenge. Abdelazer is the sole exception in having distinct heroic qualities despite a villain's role. Where she-tragedy features men who do neither harm nor good, the villain heroes are a nuisance in the unwarranted mischief they make in the play.

The lover-hero along with his consort is dedicated wholly to the creed of love. His definition of love is neither wholly sexual nor entirely platonic. It is the burning desire of the lovers for each other which transcends all other considerations, affections, and loyalties. Although there is at times a distinct tendency to lean too much on the heroine which may be interpreted as a role reversal, the lover-hero is neither as weak nor as blundering as the "she" or villain hero. We do not find him fainting with excessive grief or challenging the gods or affronting kings. He is typical of the mild-mannered gentleman epitomizing politeness and decorum. As we pass on from non-domestic to domestic setting plays we notice the internalization of the hero's conflict. In this the lover-hero has the greatest affinity with Otway's "thinking-hero." He is a compound of the nobility and largeness of mind which is in constant conflict with the unfeeling external world.



Throughout all this, once again, we focus on the heroic and the thinking hero. As I stated in Chapter One, herein lies the core of Restoration tragedy. Dryden and Otway's best plays virtually overlap each other. Within a span of barely twenty years--1670's to 1690's--their masterpieces were written, staged and some almost forgotten. Therefore one is not surprised to find striking similarities between the Drydenesque and Otwavian heroes. This is not true for Dryden's Almanzor who falls within the strictly heroic category. In fact, Almanzor and Antony represent the pinnacles of two distinct heroic orders. It is with the latter order that Otway's Jaffeir has affinity.

The concept of heroic honour is best described by Morat in Aurengzebe:

Indamora:

Tell me, what is't at which great spirits aim,  
What most yourself desire?

Morat:

Renown and fame,  
And power as uncontroll'd as is my will.<sup>14</sup>

In The Conquest of Granada Queen Isabel, similarly, puts forth the entire philosophy of heroic love in a few words:

Love's a heroic passion which can find  
No room in any base, degenerate mind:  
It kindles all the soul with honour's fire,  
To make the Lover worthy his desire.<sup>15</sup>

These two statements crystallize, for me, the entire concept of Love and Honour. The first implies the boundlessness of the heroic hero's mind which can use itself as a guage for unlimited ambition. This echoes



Jaffeir's address to the gods who gave him unlimited, elegant desires, and Antony's referring to himself as a "flaming meteor which was hurl'd from the heavens." The second statement on heroic love is more complicated. It implies that the heroic hero is truly worthy of love since his mind is neither weak nor degenerate and his soul is lofty and pure. Of such a kind is Almanzor for whom these words are spoken. Ideally a heroic hero should be a perfect combination of strength and wisdom--both physical and spiritual. Since the ideal does not exist in nature, Dryden suggests, therefore it is out of place in tragedy. Almanzor is deliberately made uneven to suit his naturalistic bias. But Queen Isabel's indirect eulogy to him suggests how far removed he is from "a true depiction of Nature." These very qualities in Otway's Jaffeir make for the striking contrast between the two heroes. Jaffeir's mind can be described as "base" and "degenerate" in several ways. At the same time, his capacity to love and to lose the world for love far outdoes Almanzor's. Antony, though he belongs to the heroic genre, is much closer to Jaffeir than to Almanzor. Jaffeir's capacity for indecision, irresponsibility and failure is echoed by Antony. Both are embroiled in affairs of state, both change their course due to intensely personal reasons usually pertaining to love. The tragic as well as dramatic impact of both far outdoes that of Almanzor. The question arises: how does



one resolve this complicated state of affairs where the heroic hero and thinking hero become almost identified?

To look at Dryden's Antony and Otway's Jaffeir as representing the best of their age is to assign them certain values which are universal. They must measure up to the tragic scale as do the tragic figures of all times, namely, Oedipus, Samson, Lear. In his Vision of Tragedy Richard B. Sewall describes the essential agony of the tragic protagonist:

The tragic vision impels the man of action to fight against destiny, kick against the pricks, and state his case before God or his fellows. It impels the artist in his fictions towards what Jaspers calls "boundary situations," man at the limits of his sovereignty--Job on the ash-heap, Prometheus on the crag. Lear on the heath and Ahab on his lonely quarter-deck.<sup>16</sup>

This brings us to the crucial question: how does the tragic hero of the Restoration measure up to these qualities, tragic encompassing the heroic as well as the non-heroic? The right combination of love and honour was greatly emphasized by poets and critics alike. (Here it is important to remember the wide implications of "Love" and "Honour.") This implied strength of body and mind without which the hero could not create order in an essentially disordered universe. Holding sway over men and minds was a feature of good leadership and fearlessness of physical or mental trials. And finally the loftiness of soul and largeness of mind which was impatient of trivia remained focussed on the nobler issues of life. This is



the tragic ideal which is fairly well brought out in Dryden's delineation of Almanzor. There is another formula for the tragic hero that exists alongside this. While the hero must have the love-honour combination, it is accompanied by several frailties which Dryden considers "enhancements" rather than blemishes. Most often the hero is shown as a weak, wavering individual of high sensibilities surrounded by a hostile unfeeling universe. Indecision and irresponsibility may result in meekness, dependence or even fickleness. All tragic heroes derive from either one of these patterns: some are perfect embodiments, others only partly so. After carefully scrutinizing the individual cases one realizes that only those who are perfect embodiments survive, while the others who are non-entities fall into the gap between the two.

Through this process, then, the heroic hero becomes the thinking-hero. Dryden's hero becomes the Otwavian hero: he does not abdicate in the latter's favour. There is an important difference between the two; the one implying evolution, the other revolutionary change. It is evolution of the hero which makes this study of the diminishing hero important. The process of change from the heroic to the thinking-hero has been the main focus of this study. Using the hero as a touchstone I have reviewed each play with regard to his changing position. As the effectiveness, centrality and significance of the hero



underwent a change so also the plays fell into their various categories. Through this process of permutation and combination one discovers the heroic hero moving towards a new goal. The fact that this change occurred in Dryden himself from his Almanzor to Antony strengthens my argument. Otway's thinking-hero was a step ahead of Dryden's in representing a higher type of heroism and deciding his own fate through knowledge. Essentially conceived of as thinking-heroes, Antony and Jafffeir swing the pendulum all the way on the other side. As I suggested earlier; had the eighteenth century produced a single playwright worthy of carrying this tragic concept further, the Restoration may well have been regarded as the "giant age." No one could foresee this future void except Dryden who sounds almost prophetic in his "Epistle the Twelfth: To My Dear Friend Mr. Congreve, on his Comedy called The Double Dealer." He deplores the fact that untutored, unworthy men will be allowed to dictate public taste. Congreve should have been the logical successor to Dryden since he has the necessary genius to carry on in the same high literary traditions:

Time, place and action may with pains be wrought.  
But genius must be born, and never can be taught.



## Appendix: Subgenres of Restoration Tragedy

This is not a complete list of all tragedies written during this period, only the ones referred to in this study. There are a few which belong to the eighteenth century but are important for this categorisation.

Heroic Tragedy	The Tragedy	Villain Tragedy	Non-Domestic Lovers Tragedy	Domestic Lovers Tragedy	Thinking Hero Tragedy
Davenant Lovers 1643	The Unnatural Mother 1698	Behn Dunkes 1691	Brony 1642	Fox 1642	Dryden Dryden 1670
The Unfortunate Lovers 1643	The Unnatural Dunci 1698	Abel Dyer 1677	The Rape 1642	The False Friend Motteux 1677	All For Love 1670
Davenant Love and Honour 1649	The Island Queen 1684	D'ursey 1691	Congreve 1642	The Mourning Bride 1647	Olivier 1680
The Siege of Rhodes 1656	The Innocent Wimper 1694	Bugs d'Ambois 1691	The Mourning Bride 1647	Beauty in Distress 1698	The Orphan 1680
Dryden Love and Honour 1649	The Unhappy Fortune 1682	Brother 1691	D'ursey 1691	The Virgin's Pilgrimage 1698	Venice Preserv'd 1682
Dryden The Indian Queen 1660	Virtue Betrayed 1682	Manley 1691	Gould 1691	Innocence Disbord's Fatal Love 1680	Trotter Cockburn 1680
The Indian Emperor 1661	Boothby 1682	The Royal Bachelor 1696	Jephcott 1691	Holkins 1737	Friendship In Jealousy 1681
The Conquest of Granada 1672	Mercilia 1670	Royne 1691	Lee 1700	Trotter Friendship 1693	Trotter Cockburn 1680
Aurenghzib 1676	Caville 1667	The Fatal Jealousy 1673	Princess of Cleve 1673	Princess of Cleve 1673	Souffreine 1673
The Perfumed Husband 1700	The Perfured Husband 1670	Porter 1663	Wobum July 1681	The Fatal Marriage 1644	The Fatal Marriage 1644
Dennis 1676	Dennis 1676	The Villain 1663	Mountfort 1688	Princess of Cleve 1673	Princess of Cleve 1673
I Lee 1676	Iphigenia 1700	Powell 1663	The Injurious Lovers 1688	Princess of Cleve 1673	Princess of Cleve 1673
Gloriana 1676	D'ursey 1700	The Treacherous Brothers 1690	Oliver 1688	Princess of Cleve 1673	Princess of Cleve 1673
The Royal Queens 1677	The Siege of Memphis 1676	Ravenscroft 1690	Alcibiades 1675	Princess of Cleve 1673	Princess of Cleve 1673
Mithridates 1678	Fame 1676	The Italian Husband 1691	Donarlos 1676	Titus Andronicus 1687	Titus Andronicus 1687
The Black Prince 1678	The Sacrifice 1680	Settle 1691	Titus & Berenice 1677	Smith 1687	Smith 1687
Mustapha 1685	Giddon 1698	The Empress Of Morocco 1673	Ravenscroft 1677	Princess of Purma 1679	Princess of Purma 1679
Cartwright 1685	Præton 1698	Love and Revenge 1675	Geling Colgan & Elkesley 1677	Southerne 1679	Southerne 1679
The General 1684	The Roman Brides 1675	Rowe 1682	Titus Andronicus 1687	The Loyal Brother Boyer 1682	The Loyal Brother Boyer 1682
The Black Prince 1684	Revenge 1697	The Ambitious Step Mother 1702	Alchilles 1700	Anon. 1682	Anon. 1682
Mustapha 1685	Granville 1698	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Cartwright 1685	Heroic Love 1698	Leokain 1702	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
The Heroic Lover 1681	Hopkins 1698	Leokain 1702	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Cibber 1681	Britannia Queen of Britan 1697	Leokain 1702	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Xerxes 1689	Britannia Queen of Britan 1697	Leokain 1702	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Rymer Edgar 1678	Phillips 1691	Leokain 1702	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Saunders 1678	The Rovengeful Queen 1698	Leokain 1702	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Tamerlane the Great 1681	Trotter 1691	Signes de Castro 1696	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Settle 1681	Weston 1691	Weston 1691	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Dumas's d'Innocence 1681	The Amazon Queen 1667	The Amazon Queen 1667	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Gedley 1677	Queen Catherine 1698	Queen Catherine 1698	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Antony & Cleopatra 1677	Rome 1698	Rome 1698	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Portuge 1677	The Fair Penitent 1693	The Fair Penitent 1693	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Hrood & Miriam 1673	The Tragedy of Jane Shore 1694	The Tragedy of Jane Shore 1694	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698
Dryden & Lee 1673	Cecilius 1673	Cecilius 1673	Leokain 1702	The Fatal Discovery 1698	The Fatal Discovery 1698



## FOOTNOTES

### Chapter I: Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Roger Boyle, The Generall, III.201-24, in The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, ed. by W. S. Clark, I (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937). All quotations from Boyle's plays are taken from the Clark text.

<sup>2</sup>John Dryden, "Dedication of the Aeneis" in Essays of John Dryden, ed. by W. P. Ker, II, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Hobbes, "The Answer of Mr. Hobbes to William Davenant's Preface Before Gondibert," p. 21. Quoted by Clark in Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, I.

<sup>4</sup>Dryden's avowal in his "An Essay of Heroic Plays" further testifies to this. "The first image I had of him was from the Achilles of Homer; the next from Tasso's Rinaldo (who was a copy of the former) . . . . The original of these, Achilles, is taken by Homer for his hero; and is described by him as one, who in strength and courage surpassed the rest of the Grecian army." (Ker, I, p. 155.)

<sup>5</sup>The "marked decline" refers to the moral tone of the plays which is lowered with the introduction of Machiavellian characters. For example, Jacobean heroes following some of the super-heroes of Elizabethan drama, or villain-heroes following the Restoration heroic heroes. I will demonstrate this in my discussion of villain tragedies in Chapter IV.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted by Jan de Vries, Heroic Song and Legend, p. 180.

<sup>7</sup>Waith in The Herculean Hero considers areté the outstanding characteristic of the Homeric hero. In Warner Jaeger's words "its [areté] oldest meaning is a combination of proud and courtly morality with warlike valour." Waith considers courage in battle as the basis for this ideal which later included nobility of mind. (p. 16.)

<sup>8</sup>See Waith's brilliant analysis of the Herculean



heroes in seven Elizabethan and Restoration plays. The Herculean Hero, pp. 13-14. The four classical tragedies featuring Hercules are Sophocles' Women of Trachis, Euripides' Hercules and Seneca's two plays Hercules Furens and Hercules Oetaeus.

<sup>9</sup>See Waith, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>While Dryden's Almanzor spends his magnificent strength in heroic feats, there is no "benevolent monarch" to canalize his energy. In Dryden this role is given to the heroine. In this case Almahide provides the tempering aid to the hero.

<sup>12</sup>See Jan de Vries, Heroic Song and Legend. I can support this generalization from my own study of some of the Indian epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata and Firdausi's Persian epic Shah-nama.

<sup>13</sup>The more heroic the tragedy the more it should look towards some wonderful possibility in man. See Waith, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>15</sup>Dryden, "Dedication of the Aeneis," Ker, II, p. 159.

<sup>16</sup>Antonio Sebastiano (Minturno), Arté Poetica (1563), trans. by Ida Treat O'Neil, in European Theories of the Drama, ed. by B. H. Clark (New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1945).

<sup>17</sup>Dryden, "Dedication of the Aeneis": "When the picture of Achilles is drawn in tragedy, he is taken with those warts, and moles, and hard features by those who represent him on stage or he is no more Achilles." (p. 160.)

<sup>18</sup>"An Essay of Heroic Plays," Ker, I, p. 157.

<sup>19</sup>Waith, pp. 145-46.

<sup>20</sup>Minturno in Arté Poetica quoted in Waith, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup>Here he refers again to Achilles who should be depicted exactly as Homer intended him. See "Dedication of the Aeneis," Ker, II,

<sup>22</sup>Dryden, "Dedication of the Aeneis," p. 177.



<sup>23</sup>Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine the Great, II.i.  
7-30 in Classics of the Renaissance Theatre, ed. by  
Huston and Kernan.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Introduction, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup>Waith considers this the overall effect of Marlowe's play (p. 87).

<sup>26</sup>Jean Chapelain in his "Les Sentimens de l'Academie françoise sur la Tragi-Comedie du Cid" comments on the importance of creating the "marvelous" from the "natural." "It is indeed a great undertaking to create the marvelous from so common a thing as the natural. And so, we believe with the Masters that herein lies the greatest merit for him who knows well how to do it." (Translated by Clark in European Theories of the Drama, pp. 90-91.) Marlowe attempts to create the "marvelous" which results in "evoking" the reader's "admiration."

<sup>27</sup>Dryden, "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting," Ker, II, p. 143. Elizabethan heroes do not conform to Dryden's requirement because the dramatic emphasis becomes distributed among the several heroes in a single play.

<sup>28</sup>Waith, p. 150.

<sup>29</sup>Alfred Harbage, Cavalier Drama, p. 45.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>31</sup>Oracular utterances, Harbage feels, are included for their own sake. It seems we are reading a book of dialogue.

<sup>32</sup>His plays are named after his heroines, e.g., The Princess, Claracilla, Cecilia and Clorinda, Bellamira, Her Dream: Harbage considers this an important indication of the feminism of Cavalier drama.

<sup>33</sup>Montague quickly rose in the Queen's favour as a result of his pastoral drama. He attained the prestige of a pioneer and his play "stamped an imprint on subsequent Cavalier Drama." See Harbage, pp. 22-23.

<sup>34</sup>Waith, p. 151.

<sup>35</sup>Shadwell, quoted in Singh's Theory of Drama, p. 31.

<sup>36</sup>Mrs. Evelyn in Diary of John Evelyn (Bray ed.), IV. 25-26. Quoted by Clark in The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle.



- <sup>37</sup>Quoted by Singh, Theory of Drama, p. 32.
- <sup>38</sup>"Dedication of The Spanish Friar," Ker, I, p. 246.
- <sup>39</sup>"Preface to Troilus and Cressida," Ker, I, p. 214.
- <sup>40</sup>"Heads of an Answer to Rymer" in The Critical Opinions of John Dryden, ed. by J. M. Aden, p. 250.
- <sup>41</sup>"Preface to Troilus and Cressida," Ker, I, p. 210.
- <sup>42</sup>"Dedication of the Aeneis," Ker, II, pp. 183-84.
- <sup>43</sup>"Preface to Troilus and Cressida," Ker, I, p. 220.
- <sup>44</sup>Dryden, "Preface to Aurengzebe," in Singh, Theory of Drama, p. 30.

### Chapter II: Heroic Tragedy

All references to Dryden's plays are from Dryden's Dramatic Works, ed. by Scott and Saintsbury, 8 vols, Edinburgh, 1882.

References to Dryden's essays are from Essays of John Dryden, ed. by W. P. Ker, 2 vols, New York, 1961.

<sup>1</sup>"Les Sentimens de l'Academie francoise sur la Tragi-comedie du Cid" was published at Richelieu's suggestion in 1637. Chapelain is credited with most of its views on the rules of Good Sense and Reason. It is regarded by some as the first piece of dogmatic criticism in French literature. Strict adherence to the rules set out by the Ancients was the most important consideration for the excellence of a dramatic piece.

<sup>2</sup>Siege of Rhodes in Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, ed. by McMillan and Jones, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>"An Essay of Heroic Plays," Ker, I, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup>Harbage's excellent account of the platonic and précieuse conventions is contained in his Cavalier Drama (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964). He talks of "their [précieuses] devotion to D'Urfe, their dilute emotions, their refined sentiments, their nice code of etiquette, their exploitation of platonic love. Suffice to say that with the establishment of Henrietta Maria in England precirosité crossed the channel and ladies of the court



toyed with an attempt to make the Astree canonical in England." (p. 36.)

<sup>5</sup>Quoted by Harbage, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup>Pepys' Diary in The Restoration Stage, ed. by John I. McCollum Jr.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted by Clark in The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, I, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>9</sup>Pepys in The Restoration Stage, p. 172.

<sup>10</sup>Memoirs of John Evelyn in The Restoration Stage, p. 89.

<sup>11</sup>Pepys in The Restoration Stage, p. 150.

<sup>12</sup>Tate, "Preface to Guzman," Clark, I, p. 440.

<sup>13</sup>If this reminds the reader of the "First State of Innocence" it may not be a totally irrelevant idea. Something of the "pure" hero in Orrery (or Davenant?) as a Restoration Adam?

<sup>14</sup>This idea owes its origin to a discussion with Prof. R. J. Merrett (University of Alberta) on the concept of love in Mustapha. He does not see the brothers as evincing a Platonic passion for the queen. Mustapha, more than Zanger, goes against the strict platonic conventions. This is a valid observation for a comparison of Spenser's lover in the "Amoretti" sonnet sequence to Orrery's lovers shows that the latter are given a few distinctly non-platonic speeches. However, compared with other heroic lovers of Dryden's for instance, their love can still be described as platonic.

<sup>15</sup>Six Plays by Racine and Corneille, ed. by Paul Landis (New York: Modern Library, 1959), I.vi.pp. 14-15.

<sup>16</sup>For example, Thomas Killigrew in The Princess, Claracilla, Cecilia and Clorinda (2 parts), Bellamira, Her Dream (2 parts), specializes in this type of plot.

<sup>17</sup>Pepys in The Restoration Stage, p. 148.

<sup>18</sup>"An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," Ker, I, p. 64.

<sup>19</sup>Dryden's "Dedication of Conquest of Granada to Duke of York," ed. by Scott and Saintsbury, p. 16.



<sup>20</sup>"An Essay of Heroic Plays," Ker, I, p. 155.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>22</sup>Martin Clifford, quoted by Kirsch in Dryden's Heroic Plays, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup>See Kaufmann's excellent analysis of All for Love in Dryden: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. by Schilling.

<sup>24</sup>Richard Leigh's remarks are quoted by Kirsch, pp. 39-40.

<sup>25</sup>Kirsch, pp. 40-41.

<sup>26</sup>Tom Brown's remarks quoted by Kirsch, p. 41.

<sup>27</sup>See T. H. Fujimura, "The Appeal of Dryden's Heroic Plays, PMLA (1960), 37-45.

<sup>28</sup>Kaufmann in his essay on All for Love expresses the same idea in his description of the indispensible situation in Dryden, "City is beleagured and internal dissension is rife. Outside the gates some strange beast its hour come round at last knocks rudely on the portals of history . . . ." See Kaufmann's essay "On the Poetics of Terminal Tragedy" in Dryden: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. by Schilling.

<sup>29</sup>"An Essay of Heroic Plays," Ker, I, p. 153.

<sup>30</sup>Artaméne ou le Grand Cyrus, 3d ed., 1653, Book II, p. 345, quoted by A. H. Parsons, "The English Heroic Play," MLR, XXXIII (1938), 6.

<sup>31</sup>Fujimura, "The Appeal of Dryden's Heroic Plays," 40.

<sup>32</sup>See Arthur Kirsch, Dryden's Heroic Plays; Thomas Fujimura, "The Appeal of Dryden's Heroic Plays," PMLA (1960); Scott Osborn, "Heroical Love in Dryden's Heroic Drama," PMLA (1958).

<sup>33</sup>Leigh, Remarques, quoted in Kirsch, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup>See Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 33.

<sup>35</sup>Corneille's Examen quoted by Kirsch. See Kirsch's study of the "Cornélian Hero," pp. 46-65.

<sup>36</sup>Waith in The Herculean Hero says, "Boabdelin's claim on Almahide, like his claim to the throne, has the



sanction of legality; it has not, by the standards of romance, the sanction of true love." (p. 158.)

<sup>37</sup>This was pointed out to me by Prof. R. J. Merrett. I was able to see various metaphysical patterns in Dryden's plays. The similarity between Dryden's passage and Donne's poem may be due to Dryden's careful study of Donne. This poem, I believe, was very well known in the seventeenth century.

"When by thy scorne, O murdresse, I am dead,  
And that thou thinkest thee free,  
From all solicitation from mee,  
Then shall my ghost come into thy bed."

(Songs and Sonnets, I, ed. by Helen Gardner.)

<sup>38</sup>See Price, To the Palace of Wisdom. He shows several likenesses between lines from Dryden's heroic plays and Donne's songs and sonnets, pp. 41, 237, and 239.

<sup>39</sup>Scott describes an established pattern of love according to this theory: 1. Love first enters through the eyes. 2. Love at first sight is normal for the physically inclined. 3. Love being a hot and moist passion, lovers are uncomfortably warm. 4. They are subject to excruciating pain and the greatest of miseries. 5. Love is a passion which sinfully overcomes reason. 6. Love is a brain sickness like madness of frenzy. 7. Almost no one, even he who resists love is not immune. 8. Since the erotic lover has lost his reason, immoral acts due to love are forgiven easily.

<sup>40</sup>Waith calls her a "female Almanzor," p. 164.

<sup>41</sup>The Spectator, Vol. I, ed. by G. Gregory Smith, pp. 149-50.

<sup>42</sup>"Dedication of Conquest of Grenada to Duke of York," p. 12.

<sup>43</sup>See Waith, p. 176.

<sup>44</sup>Fujimura, "The Appeal of Dryden's Heroic Plays," 45.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>"Prologue to Aurengzebe," ed. by Scott and Saintsbury, p. 201.

<sup>47</sup>Bruce King, Dryden's Major Plays, p. 146.

<sup>48</sup>"Preface to All for Love," Ker, I, p. 191.



<sup>49</sup>Quoted by Waith, p. 146.

<sup>50</sup>Waith, p. 191. "From a dramatic point of view the showpiece of this act, and indeed one of the best scenes of the entire play, is the quarrel and reconciliation of Antony and his General."

<sup>51</sup>See Kaufmann's essay "The Poetics of Terminal Tragedy: Dryden's All for Love," in Dryden: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. by Schilling, p. 94.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-92.

<sup>53</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 237.

<sup>54</sup>Waith, p. 198.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>57</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom.

<sup>58</sup>Kaufmann, p. 92. "Alexas, from the 'atmospheric' bit player he was in Antony and Cleopatra to the magnitude of a stage-master like Johnson's Mosca, manipulat[es] the feelings and actions of his betters in All for Love."

<sup>59</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom.

<sup>60</sup>Ker, I, p. 210.

### Chapter III: She-Tragedy

All excerpts from she-tragedies are taken from Three Centuries of Drama, Readex Microprint Corporation, Chester, Vermont, U.S.A. In the text they are indicated by act, scene and page number.

<sup>1</sup>Sophocles, Antigone in Ten Greek Plays, ed. by L. R. Lind (Boston: Riverside Press, 1957), p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Sophocles, Electra in Sophocles II, trans. by David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 132.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



<sup>5</sup> Euripides, Electra in Euripides V, trans. by Emily Townsend Vermeule (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 54-55.

<sup>6</sup> Aristophanes, The Frogs in The Plays of Aristophanes, II, trans. by J. Hookham Frere (New York: Everyman Library, 1945), p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Euripides, Hippolytus in Euripides, I, trans. by David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 189.

<sup>8</sup> Ashley Thorndike, Tragedy, p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> Arden of Faversham, xiv.43-44 in Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies, ed. by Keith Sturgess.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., xiv.61-63.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., xiv.154-58.

<sup>12</sup> Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy, II.i.364 in Eight Famous Elizabethan Plays, ed. by Esther Cloudman Dunn.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., IV.i.418.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., V.iii.429.

<sup>15</sup> Middleton and Rowley, The Changeling, V.iii.110-11 in Jacobean Tragedies, ed. by A. H. Gomme.

<sup>16</sup> See Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century, ed. by Knapp, p. 174. Playwrights pay extravagant compliments to the ladies in the boxes to whom they appeal for mercy when they are sentenced by the jury of the pit. Farquhar's Prologue to The Recruiting Officer is one of the many instances of "flattering the fair."

"If for one Helen's artful, vicious charms,  
Half the transported world was found in arms;  
What for so many Helens may we dare,  
Whose minds as well as faces are so fair?  
If by one Helen's eyes old Greece could find  
Its Homer fired to write--even Homer blind;  
The Britons sure beyond compare may write,  
That view so many Helens every night."

(Farquhar, ed. by William Archer, pp. 248-49)

Knapp cites the Epilogue to James Sterling's The Rival Generals to illustrate the authors' disregard for the critics in favour of the ladies.



"Our Muse, ye snarling Cynicks, scorns, your Favour,  
 'This that Illustrious Ring must damn or save her.'"

This was not written till 1722 but it reflects the continuing trend from the previous century.

<sup>17</sup>Pepys', Diary, April 3, 1664 in The Restoration Stage, ed. by McCollum, p. 148.

<sup>18</sup>Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, p. 132.

<sup>19</sup>The Unnatural Mother was published in 1698, reputed to have been written by a "young lady" referred to in the Prologue as "A woman [who] now comes to reform the stage." What reform could be effected by such a lurid account of incest and murder can only be conjectured at. Perhaps the authoress meant to arouse the emotions of pity and compassion for her distressed protagonists.

<sup>20</sup>Pepys', Diary, December 8, 1666. Balfour Daniels, Some Seventeenth Century Worthies in a Twentieth-Century Mirror, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup>Nathaniel Lee, The Rival Queens, III.i.118-23 in Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, ed. by McMillan and Jones.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., I.ii.389-95.

<sup>23</sup>This prologue according to Knapp is "an excellent introduction to the she-tragedy." Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century. Its microcard (Readex series) print is quite illegible but so far as I know no other print is available.

#### Chapter IV: Villain Tragedy

All quotations from plays, excerpts from prologues, epilogues and dedications, unless otherwise mentioned, are from Three Centuries of Drama, Readex Microprint Series.

<sup>1</sup>Dryden's "Prologue to Tyrannic Love," ed. by Scott and Saintsbury, p. 383.

<sup>2</sup>Horace's ideas used by Dryden in his "Preface to Tyrannic Love," p. 381.

<sup>3</sup>In order to single out villain tragedies from the rest of Restoration plays, I have used the following criteria: 1. The major theme should be concerned with



the depiction of a villainous plot. 2. The villains are cast in the place of the hero and heroine. 3. The motivation for villainy is slight compared to the outcome which may well involve several deaths. 4. The plays end in the slaughter of the victims as well as the villains. Minor discrepancies exist but in general these criteria seem valid for the plays I am going to use in my analysis.

<sup>4</sup>Elkanah Settle, The Empress of Morocco, V.i.166 in Five Heroic Plays, ed. by Bonomy Dobree.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., V.i.173.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., V.i.165.

<sup>7</sup>Two other tragedies of Mrs. Behn are known to us: her first, The Young King, better described as a tragi-comedy, was produced in 1679. The second was again a tragi-comedy with elements of farce. But here the tragic part is developed with delicacy and insight; as Woodcock says, "far above her one full-scale tragedy of Horror Abdelazer." This was The Widow Ranter or Bacon in Virginia which George Jenkins produced in 1690.

<sup>8</sup>Aphra Behn, Abdelazer, I.ii.14 in The Works of Mrs. Aphra Behn, II, ed. by Montague Summers. All quotations from Abdelazer are taken from the Summers edition.

<sup>9</sup>The same motivation in Hamlet never earned him the title of a villain. Abdelazer, lacking the verbal and situational sophistication of Hamlet becomes one of the prominent villains of his period.

<sup>10</sup>See Summers' introduction to Abdelazer.

<sup>11</sup>Dryden, "Preface to Troilus and Cressida," Ker, I, pp. 213-14.

<sup>12</sup>Giles Jacob. The Poetical Register, I, p. 210.

<sup>13</sup>"I shall make him appear like the leech, that lives upon the Blood of Men, drawn from the Gums; and when he is rubb'd with salt spewes it up again." Gerard Langbaine, English Dramatic Poets, p. 418.

<sup>14</sup>Aston Cokain, The Tragedy of Ovid, IV.iii.269 in The Dramatic Works of Sir Aston Cokain (Edinburgh, 1874).

<sup>15</sup>Langbaine says: "Mr. Durfey like the Cuckow, makes it his business to suck other Birds' Eggs." (p. 179.)

<sup>16</sup>See D'Urfey's "Preface to Bussy D'Ambois."



<sup>17</sup> See Langbaine, p. 407.

### Chapter V: Lovers' Tragedy

All quotations from plays, excerpts from prologues, epilogues and dedications, unless otherwise mentioned, are from Three Centuries of Drama, Readex Microprint Series.

<sup>1</sup>Sarup Singh, The Theory of Drama in the Restoration Period, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," Ker, I, pp. 179-80.

<sup>3</sup>Dryden's "Preface to Troilus and Cressida," Ker, I, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup>Singh, Theory of Drama, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted by Singh, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>8</sup>This classification lends itself better than a chronological division. Most of these plays were written over a period of twenty years or less, so we do not notice any important chronological categories. The heyday of domestic drama being no more than a few years away seems a logical outcome of what I refer to as domestic Lovers' Tragedy.

<sup>9</sup>Peter Motteux, Beauty in Distress, III.27.

<sup>10</sup>D. E. Baker, Biographia Dramatika, p. 366.

<sup>11</sup>Congreve's "Dedication to Her Royal Highness, The Princess." The Mourning Bride in The Complete Plays of William Congreve, ed. by Herbert Davis.

<sup>12</sup>"... the first Person that appears on Stage is an afflicted widow in her Mourning-Weeds, with half a Dozen fatherless children attending her, like those that usually hang about the Figure of Charity." Addison, The Spectator, No. 44, Friday, April 20, 1711 in The Spectator, I, ed. by G. Gregory Smith and Austin Dobson.

<sup>13</sup>Giles Jacob, The Poetical Register, p. 246.



<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>15</sup> Rapin, Reflections, p. 112, quoted in Singh, Theory of Drama, p. 45.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> John Crowne, "Epistle to the Reader," in The Destruction of Jerusalem, quoted in Singh, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Catherine Trotter Cockburn, The Unhappy Penitent.

<sup>19</sup> Dryden, "Preface to Cleomenes," quoted in Singh, p. 286.

#### Chapter VI: Thomas Otway and Thinking-Hero Tragedy

For Otway's plays I have used The Works of Thomas Otway, ed. by J. C. Ghosh, 2 vols., Oxford, 1932. All textual quotations are referred to the above edition. Quotations from Dryden's essays are from Essays of John Dryden, ed. by W. P. Ker, 2 vols., New York, 1961. All quotations from Dryden's plays are from Dryden's Dramatic Works, ed. by Scott and Saintsbury, 8 vols., Edinburgh, 1882.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in A. M. Taylor, Next to Shakespeare Otway's Venice Preserv'd, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> David Hauser. "Otway Preserved: Theme and Form in Venice Preserv'd," in Restoration Dramatists, ed. by Earl Miner, p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> Giles Jacob, The Poetical Register, p. 195.

<sup>5</sup> Downes, Roscius Anglicanus in The Restoration Stage, ed. by John I. McCollum, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Current interest in Restoration theatre is evinced in the NBC production of The First Churchills. (Time, February 8, 1971.) This could well lead to a dramatization of other period plays, which would enable the student to view it within its proper context instead of always treating it as closet drama.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor, Next to Shakespeare, p. 9.



<sup>8</sup>See the chapter on Otway in Dobree's Restoration Tragedy.

<sup>9</sup>For a detailed discussion of the views of these poets and wits see Sarup Singh, Theory of Drama in the Restoration Period. Although they declare their intention to show "Men and Women" rather than "Heroes" they do not seem to adhere to this in their plays. One cannot help comparing Otway's Castalio to Ravenscroft's King Edgar in King Edgar and Alfreda written only three years before The Orphan: the difference is remarkable.

<sup>10</sup>Dryden, "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting," Ker, II, p. 125.

<sup>11</sup>Ker, I, p. 64.

<sup>12</sup>"Preface to Aurengzebe," in the Scott and Saintsbury edition.

<sup>13</sup>Ker, I, p. 191.

<sup>14</sup>Ker, I, pp. 210, 215.

<sup>15</sup>Ker, II, p. 125.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 125-126.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>18</sup>Hauser in Restoration Dramatists, p. 141.

<sup>19</sup>Dryden, quoted in Singh, Theory of Drama, pp. 36-37.

<sup>20</sup>Edward Ravenscroft's "Prologue to King Edgar and Alfreda," quoted in Singh, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup>George Saintsbury, quoted in Aline M. Taylor, Next to Shakespeare, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup>David Hauser makes a detailed study of Venice Preserv'd as essentially derived from heroic traditions.

<sup>23</sup>Dryden, "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," Ker, I, p. 64.

<sup>24</sup>Addison, quoted in Taylor, p. 250.

<sup>25</sup>Taylor, Next to Shakespeare, p. 65.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>27</sup>Milton, Samson Agonistes, ll. 623-626.



<sup>28</sup>Byron, quoted by Taylor, p. 67.

<sup>29</sup>"Preface to Troilus and Cressida," Ker, I, p. 210.

<sup>30</sup>Otway, "Preface to Don Carlos Prince of Spain," ed. by Ghosh, p. 174.

<sup>31</sup>Giles Jacob, Poetical Register, p. 194.

<sup>32</sup>Taylor, Next to Shakespeare, pp. 66-67.

<sup>33</sup>Milton, Samson Agonistes, ll. 52-54.

<sup>34</sup>Malcolm Elwin, Playgoer's Handbook to Restoration Drama, p. 142.

### Chapter VII: Conclusion

<sup>1</sup>George Lillo, The London Merchant, p. 617, in Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, ed. by McMillan and Jones (New York, 1959).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 619.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 618.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., II.xiv.629-30.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., IV.i.634-35.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., V.ii.641.

<sup>8</sup>See Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama 1600-1900, III (Cambridge, 1952), p. 56.

<sup>9</sup>"A Voice of Reason from a Distance," was suggested for Douglas by Prof. Hargreaves in the course of a seminar on Restoration and Eighteenth Century, at the University of Alberta, 1968-69. Later it became the title for one of the papers on Home's Douglas.

<sup>10</sup>Dryden's Dedication to Love Triumphant, quoted by Singh, p. 286.

<sup>11</sup>"Dedication of The Spanish Friar," Ker, I, p. 247.

<sup>12</sup>D'Urfey's Siege of Memphis has been discussed in Chapter III. Here Zelmura, the militant queen, upholds



feminism in these words to Moaron, the captive Syrian Prince.

"A woman's hand, is that, Sir, such a shame,  
That I must be upbraided with the name?  
Let my brave actions that mean stile controul,  
For though a woman I've a manly soul."

A similar militant feminism is present in Queen Rosamunda in William Phillips' The Revengeful Queen.

<sup>13</sup>See Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, for a detailed discussion of the Banksian hero.

<sup>14</sup>Aurengzebe, V.i.128, Scott and Saintsbury edition.

<sup>15</sup>The Conquest of Granada, Part I, I.i.128, Scott and Saintsbury edition.

<sup>16</sup>Sewall quoted by Waith in The Herculean Hero, p. 15.



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